BENNETT, COLEMAN & CO. LTD. | Estd. 1838 | VOL. 43 NO.66 BENGALURU | WEDNESDAY, MARCH 18, 2026 | METRO | PAGES 36 | PRICE ₹5**

THE TIMES OF INDIA

INCLUDES 8 PAGES OF BANGALORE TIMES AND 2 PAGES OF TIMES SCHOOL

INDIA'S LARGEST ENGLISH NEWSPAPER

Sunil Gavaskar alleges that the signing of Pak spinner Abrar Ahmed by an Indian-owned Hundred franchise in UK **'indirectly contributes to the deaths of Indian soldiers and civilians'**, P 23

Kolkata Knight Riders pacer Harshit Rana is likely to miss a significant part of the upcoming IPL as he continues to recover from a knee surgery he underwent last month, P 23

Mexican Prez Claudia Sheinbaum confirms her country is prepared to host Iran's 2026 World Cup first-round matches if needed, due to the West Asia conflict. This follows Trump discouraging the Iranian team from participating, citing safety concerns, P 24

Devon Conway blasts 60 off 49 balls before New Zealand skittle South Africa cheaply to win 2nd T20I by 68 runs and level the 5-match series 1-1 at Hamilton, P 23

400 killed in Pak strike on Kabul hosp; India slams 'barbaric act'

'Trying To Dress Up Massacre As Military Op'

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi/Kabul/Islamabad: India unequivocally condemned Pakistan's "barbaric" airstrikes on a Kabul drug rehabilitation hospital, which was said to have resulted in a death toll of around 400, saying that Islamabad was trying to dress up a massacre as a military operation. Expressing solidarity with Afghanistan, the Indian govt said this was a cowardly and unconscionable act of violence that claimed the lives of a large number of civilians in a facility which could by no means be justified as a military target.

Hamdullah Fitrat, the deputy spokesman for the Taliban, said in a post on X the airstrike took place at 9 pm (1630 GMT) on Monday and targeted the state-run Omid Hospital, which he said was a 2,000-bed drug rehabilitation centre. Taliban has reported 408 dead, 265 injured in the Pakistan airstrike. Hundreds more were said to have been wounded at the facility, flattening buildings used to treat people from across the country for addictions to marijuana, amphetamines and other narcotics.

▶Attack during Ramzan, P 7

PAK DENIES TARGETING HOSPITAL

- **Pakistan** has denied targeting any hospital, saying it is **only engaging military and terrorist infrastructure**
- Kabul residents said Camp Phoenix was an **abandoned Nato military base in the city, which was converted into a drug treatment centre** about a decade ago
- **India says the 'attack during Ramzan,** a time of peace, reflection and mercy among Muslim communities, **makes it all the more reprehensible'**

Afghan Red Crescent Society volunteers with bodies of victims after the Pak attack

Pak brutality will get befitting reply: Taliban spokesman

Vowing retaliation after the strike on Afghanistan's Omid Addiction Treatment Hospital, Taliban chief spokesperson Zabihullah Mujahid said from Kabul on Tuesday that the attack "will not go unanswered". Mujahid told **TOI's Ismat Ara** that the Taliban govt was currently focused on rescue operations.

TOI INTERVIEW

"Right now, we are busy with rescue, identifying the dead and searching for the injured. It is a matter of deep sorrow for us. But this crime and inhumane brutality will not go unanswered," he said. "There was no military presence at this location". P 22

Israel claims strikes killed chiefs of Iran nat'l security council, para force

Ali Larijani, secretary of Iran's Supreme National Security Council, and Gen Gholam Reza Soleimani, head of the Revolutionary Guard's all-volunteer Basij force, were "eliminated last night", Israeli defence minister Israel Katz said Tuesday.

Larijani, 67, has in effect been running Iran behind the scenes since the death of supreme leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei on Feb 28.

Iran is yet to comment on Israel's latest claims, after which Larijani's X account published an image of a handwritten statement in honour of Iranian sailors who had been killed in a US attack.

Larijani and Soleimani were key to Iran's violent crackdown on protests in Jan that challenged the theocracy's 47-year rule. Larijani hails from one of Iran's most famous political families, which media outlets have compared to the Kennedys in the US. He served for 12 years as speaker of Parliament and has written 6 philosophy books, including 3 on philosopher Immanuel Kant. AGENCIES

▶In a combat tent, P 22

WILL BE TAKING CUBA, SAYS TRUMP

- 'I do believe I'll be having the honour of taking Cuba,' President Trump said in the Oval Office Monday, adding, 'I mean, whether I free it, take it — **I think I could do anything I want with it'**
- **Nato making a 'foolish mistake' on Iran,** says Trump, after alliance rebuffed his call to help reopen Strait of Hormuz
- **Unknown projectile hits Kuwait-flagged tanker east of Fujairah** in UAE, causing minor structural damage

A residential area in central Tehran after an attack Monday

- **Sensex rallies for the 2nd day,** climbing 568 points. The rupee declined 12 paise to settle at an **all-time low of 92.4 against the dollar**

Top US official quits over 'Iran war under pressure from Israel'

Washington: Joe Kent, director of US' National Counterterrorism Center, announced his resignation Tuesday, citing concerns about the justification for military strikes in Iran and saying he "cannot in good conscience" back the Trump administration's war.

"Iran posed no imminent threat to our nation, and it is clear we started this war due to pressure from Israel and its powerful American lobby," he said on X. Kent posted the resignation letter in which he wrote about a "misinformation campaign" by high-ranking Israeli officials. AGENCIES

▶Arguments on war, P 22

Odisha fire: Alarms, sprinklers snoozed

The automatic fire alarms and sprinkler system failed to activate; instead of alerting the fire station just 200m away, a staffer first called hospital authorities, wasting crucial minutes — these are among the findings of Odisha govt's fact-finding report on the fire at Cuttack's SCB Medical College early Monday, which killed 12 patients. P 8

In big churn, TMC drops 74 lawmakers

In one of its biggest candidate reshuffles, the ruling TMC dropped 74 sitting MLAs, nearly a third of its legislative strength, while announcing candidates for 291 of the 294 West Bengal assembly seats. P 10

14 throw biryani waste in Ganga, arrested

Fourteen men were arrested in Varanasi Tuesday for hurting religious feelings after a video showed them holding an Iftar party on a boat and disposing biryani waste in Ganga. P 8

SC urges govt for paternity leave law, says unjust to overlook dad's equal role

AmitAnand.Choudhary
@timesofindia.com

New Delhi: The SC on Tuesday urged the Centre to bring in a law to recognise paternity leave as a social security benefit, highlighting the long-overlooked role of a father in caring for newborns.

"Society has historically attributed caregiving and nurturing responsibilities almost exclusively to mothers. While the role of a mother is undeniably central to a child's emotional, physical, and psychological development, it would be incomplete and unjust to overlook the equally significant role of a father," a bench of Justices J B Pardiwala and R Mahadevan said. The court said society has normalised an unintentional form of injustice.

The court made the suggestions while setting aside a provision in Code on Social Security that denied maternity leave to a woman adopting a child older than three years.

Maternity leave must even if adopted child over 3 mths: SC

Observing that the arrival of a child in a family, whether by birth, adoption or surrogacy, involves time, attention and rearing responsibilities, SC Tuesday ruled that maternity leave is the right of all women and struck down a provision mandating that maternity leave cannot be granted in case of adoption of a child above three months of age. P 14

The Supreme Court said that a father's absence during a child's formative years due to job constraints denies both opportunity for early bonding, and suggested a law on paternity leave on the lines of the CCS (Leave) Rules, which grant male govt servants 15 days' leave for the birth of the child or adoption.

▶Gendered roles, P 14

Overzealous investigation is as fatal as tardy one: SC

AmitAnand.Choudhary
@@timesofindia.com

New Delhi: It was a "sham and premeditated probe" and "a farce prosecution" that sent a couple wrongly to jail, where they spent eight years for allegedly killing his old parents, observed the Supreme Court while acquitting them recently.

"Overzealous investigation is as fatal to prosecution as are the lethargic and the tardy. Framing a case on public perceptions and personal predilections ends up in a mess, often putting to peril an innocent and always letting free the perpetrator," said a bench of Justices Sanjay Kumar and K Vinod Chandran.

Referring to various loopholes in the probe and the trial , the bench asked the police and courts to follow accepted practices and procedural rules to the hilt.

▶Dying declaration, P 14

GULMARG? NO. DHARWAD!

TOI

SUMMER SHOWERS: Parts of Dharwad and Raichur transformed into an all-white landscape after 4-5 inches of hail blanketed roads and farmlands—more reminiscent of Gulmarg than scorching North Karnataka. In Kalaghatagi, youngsters took to the streets, celebrating the rare spectacle, even as the thick hail cover turned roads dangerously slippery, bringing traffic to a halt with vehicles stranded in the icy buildup. In Bengaluru, parts of Sanjaynagar and Hebbal, too, saw hailstorms Tuesday evening along with light showers | P 2

Free 6 nationals held in 'terror plot': Ukraine

Ukraine has lodged a protest with Indian govt over NIA's arrest of six of its citizens for allegedly plotting to carry out terror activities linked to insurgent groups along the India-Myanmar border. Kyiv has reportedly sought their immediate release arguing that there were no "proven facts" to establish their role in illegal activities in India or Myanmar. It said charges against them relate to their unauthorised presence in Mizoram & their alleged illegal crossing of the state border. A US national too was arrested. All seven accused are in NIA custody. P 6

At 67%, grad share among jobless youth doubles in 20yrs

Shiva Rajora@timesofindia.com

New Delhi: The share of graduates among unemployed youth (20-29 years of age) has more than doubled over the past two decades, at a time when India has made substantial progress in expanding access to higher education for its youth, said a report released by the Azim Premji University on Tuesday.

Data showed that around 67% of unemployed youth in 2023 (around 1.1 crore) in the country were graduates, up from 32% in 2004 (30 lakh). The share of graduates among youth has risen to 28% in 2023 (6.3 crore) from 10% in 2004 (1.9 crore). Between 2004 and 2023, around 50 lakh graduates were added every year, while the number of employed graduates rose by 28 lakh annually, out of which 17 lakh were salaried.

"Graduate employment, therefore, has not kept pace with graduate supply," the report titled 'State of Working India 2026' noted.

"The failure to create adequate jobs for the burgeoning population of graduates has resulted in a situation of too many graduates and too few jobs. This has also contributed to the slowdown in graduate earnings," the report noted. It argued that there are several reasons, including concerns around employability of young graduates, their lack of experience or skill mismatch.

The report also said that there was a greater capacity among the youth to wait before finding a job, a phenomenon that included the poorer households as well, due to better income levels than earlier.

▶Share of young men, P 10

Now in B'luru: Drone flies 40 lab samples in 10 mins

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Bengaluru: A city-based healthcare firm and a logistics startup have teamed up to use drones to deliver diagnostic samples, bypassing Bengaluru's gridlocked roads and ensuring faster supply.

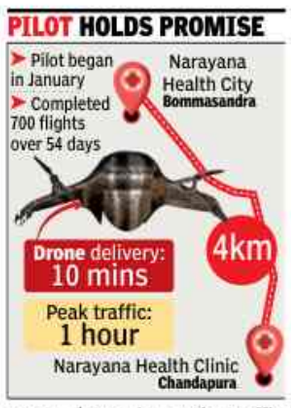
In a pilot project, Narayana Health and Airbound used specialised drone flights to transport samples from a clinic in Chandapura to Narayana Health City in Bommasandra, significantly cutting down transit time compared to road commute. Under the pilot, running since Jan 2026, around 700 flights were conducted over 54 days, with each flight carrying up to 40 diagnostic samples.

The drone covered a 4km aerial route in just 10 minutes, what would typically take about an hour in peak traffic. Apart from saving time, each of these drone flights cost about Re 1 in operational expenses, making it a more economical option than road transport..

▶Enable lower cost, P 5

PILOT HOLDS PROMISE

- Pilot began in January
- Completed 700 flights over 54 days



Adani group to get reins of Jaiprakash Associates

Saurabh.Sinha
@timesofindia.com

New Delhi: The National Company Law Tribunal has approved Adani Enterprises' resolution plan for the bankrupt Jaiprakash Associates Ltd (JAL), which has a presence in real estate in Noida and Greater Noida, including the plush Jaypee Greens, along with the F1 track, as well as power, cement and hospitality.

The company, once a Gaur family jewel, saw a high-profile contest in which Adani vied with Anil Agarwal's Vedanta in the last round. Jindal Power & Steel, Dalmia Bharat and PNC Infratech were the other bidders. "NCLT (Tuesday) orally pronounced an order approving resolution plan dated Oct 14, 2025, by AEL... A detailed disclosure shall be made upon written order being made available... the resolution plan, or any part thereof, may be implemented by AEL, its promoters, promoter group, and such other persons who are generally identified as being part of Adani group (including Adani Power Limited, Adani Infra (India) Ltd, APSEZ... or through any special purpose vehicle or any entity identified by AEL...," AEL's regulatory filing stated.

▶Complete JAL projects, P 20

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B'luru pollution trail may reach Mekedatu reservoir site: Report

Niranjan.Kaggere
@timesofindia.com

Bengaluru: The Karnataka govt's ambitious Mekedatu balancing reservoir project on Cauvery river, planned as a major drinking water source for Bengaluru, may face fresh environmental scrutiny. A recent report has warned that untreated sewage flowing through the city's polluted river network could eventually reach the Cauvery basin near the proposed dam site in Kanakapura.

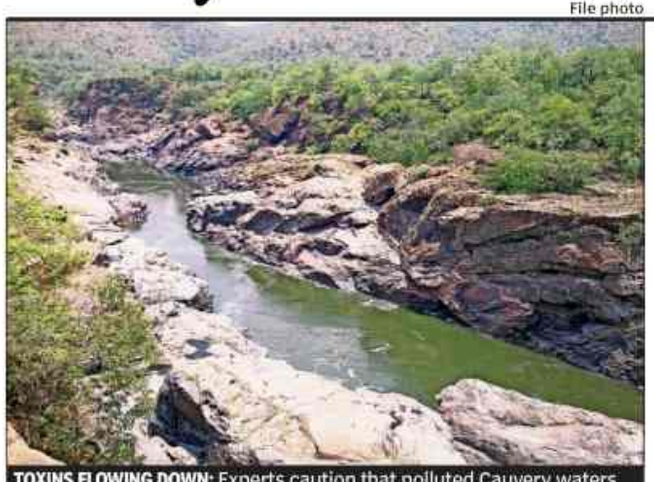
VIA VRISHABHAVATHI

The report, State of Vrishabhavathi River, released by Mapping Malnad, a citizen-led platform working on Western Ghats and river conservation, cautioned that wastewater from Bengaluru carried by Vrishabhavathi river ultimately joins Arkavathi river, which drains into the Cauvery near Mekedatu region. "Without addressing the upstream pollution sources, contamination could travel downstream towards the region where the govt is proposing to build the reservoir," it stated.

Researchers found that Vrishabhavathi carries large amounts of untreated sewage, industrial effluents and urban waste, degrading water quality in Arkavathi basin. Monitoring data shows high organic pollution, bacterial contamination, and reduced dissolved oxygen in stretches receiving its inflows, harming the river's ecological health.

Despite the Rs 391-crore rejuvenation project for Byramangala reservoir, the report says such measures fail to address the root cause — unchecked discharge of sewage and industrial effluents into Vrishabhavathi. It warns that these efforts merely shift pollution downstream, placing an unfair burden on farmers in areas such as Kanakapura and the Harobele dam command region. The report also highlights long-standing concerns that wastewater irrigation around Bengaluru has led to crops being contaminated with heavy metals.

File photo



TOXINS FLOWING DOWN: Experts caution that polluted Cauvery waters at Mekedatu could worsen contamination and ecological risks

> Given the pollution and complexity of this scale, the only solution is prevention — through stricter enforcement and accountability at the source... The current regulatory environment, shaped by the administrative push for 'ease of doing business', appears to be moving in the opposite direction by diluting safeguards, relaxing consent and inspection regimes, and reducing compliance burden on industries driving this crisis
> **Nirmala Gowda** | LEAD RESEARCHER

The report pointed out the pollution risks could intensify if contaminated water is impounded in a reservoir. "CPCB (Central Pollution Control Board) has already classified Cauvery as a polluted river at certain stretches. When a dam is built, this polluted water will stagnate, concentrate and settle, accumulating heavy metals, pesticides and persistent chemicals carried in the waters," researchers said. Nirmala Gowda, lead researcher of the project, said stricter enforcement and prevention at source are critical to addressing the crisis.

"Given the pollution and complexity of this scale, the only solution is prevention — through stricter enforcement and accountability at the source. But enforcement alone is not enough without a deeper shift in how all of us view rivers — not as extractable resources but as a living ecosystem whose health is inseparable from our own. The current regulatory environment, shaped by the administrative push for 'ease of doing business', appears to be moving in the opposite direction by diluting safeguards, relaxing consent and inspection regimes and reducing compliance burden on the very industries driving this crisis," she noted.

Researchers also noted that the public debate around the Mekedatu project largely centred on interstate water-sharing disputes between Karnataka and Tamil Nadu, while the environmental dimension has received far less attention.

Garment worker killed, husband injured in bus hit

Times News Network

Bengaluru: A 30-year-old garment worker died while her husband escaped with injuries when a BMTC bus, which was allegedly being driven rashly, knocked down their bike at Gollarahatti Cross near Nelamangala Sunday night. G Lakshmi, the victim, stayed off Magadi Main Road and was from Yadgir district.

Lakshmi was riding pillion with husband Devendrappa, a daily-wage worker, when the bus, heading to Bengaluru from Magadi, rear-ended their bike. Lakshmi was thrown to the right and crushed to death under the front wheels of the bus. The bus driver is absconding," an investigating officer said.

Many units, one crisis: Gas shortage threatens to stall 3k Peenya MSMEs

Govt Urged To Ensure Proper LPG Dispatch

Nithya.Mandyam
@timesofindia.com

Bengaluru: The spectre of complete shutdown looms over Peenya Industrial Area — one of the largest industrial hubs in the country — with disruptions in gas supply threatening over 3,000 micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) with slowdown or shutdown of operations.

BURNER WOES

Industries dependent on LPG for critical processes such as welding, heat treatment, metal casting and food processing have been grappling with irregular supply over the past 10 days. The situation is worsening by the day, triggering fears of production losses, delayed orders, and wage stress on workers.

Out of nearly 13,500 industrial units in Peenya, nearly 3,500 units are directly dependent on commercial gas. Many units report that supply has dropped sharply, affecting daily operations and forcing production cuts.

"Nearly 3,500 industries in the Peenya region are dependent on LPG, which is a primary source of production activity. Fuel costs account for 15-30% of production expenses. We are already facing fiscal-end pressures and the upcoming festival season, and such disruptions will severely affect output, manpower, and the local economy," R Shivakumar, former president of Peenya Industries Association (PIA), told **TOI**.

He added that gas agencies have cited supply constraints and are distributing cylinders based on availability. "We request the govt to intervene, handhold the MSME sector, and ensure a proper dispatch schedule from manufacturers. Without timely supply, industries may be forced to halt operations and could face penalties for delayed deliveries," he said.

Peenya, spread over nearly 50sqkm, is one of Asia's largest industrial clusters, employing close to 13 lakh workers. The cluster generates an annual turnover of about Rs 35,000 crore and contributes nearly Rs 8,500 crore worth of exports, making it a critical pillar of Karnataka's manufacturing ecosystem.

Industry representatives point to global factors exacerbating the crisis. India imports 65–66% of its LPG, over 90% of it from war-ravaged West Asia. The shortage is already disrupting furnace-based operations, gas cutting, and moisture-removal processes across sectors such as foundries, fabrication units, powder coating, and pharmaceuticals. For micro enterprises operating on thin margins, rising fuel costs and supply uncertainty are adding to working capital stress.

Despite the gravity of the situation, industry leaders say no formal meeting has yet been convened by the industries department to address the crisis or discuss mitigation measures.

DP Danappa, president of PIA, elaborated: "Prolonged disruption could lead to reduced industrial output, supply chain bottlenecks in engineering and automobile components, increased manufacturing costs, and potential job losses across the MSME ecosystem."

Syed Asif & file photo

CRUNCH TIME: Gas supply disruptions in Peenya Industrial Area threaten shutdowns, risking production losses, supply chain disruptions and job stress across one of India's largest industrial hubs

> We use heat treatment extensively to ensure automobile parts do not wear out quickly. For this process, we rely on LPG cylinders. In a month, we require about 10 commercial gas cylinders, costing around Rs 10,000, depending on the process. Now that supply has stopped, we are unable to continue production or supply parts due to gas shortage
> **Ramesh KN** | OWNER, RKN HEAT TREATMENT SOLUTIONS

> We are going through one of the worst phases. As a fabrication industry, we depend on gas for cutting and welding operations. With the financial year-end approaching and pending corporate orders, we are struggling to respond to clients. We use oxy-flame cutters and require about 100 gas cylinders a month to keep operations running. Now, we are managing with just a handful of cylinders. Despite this, we are continuing to pay our labourers because we cannot afford to lose our workforce
> **Keshav Murthy** | OWNER, BHARANI INDUSTRIES

> There is no acute shortage of LPG, but there is definitely a significant reduction in supply. Earlier, we used 10 cylinders per day; now it has come down to five. A 17kg commercial cylinder costs around Rs 8,000, which is actually lower than usual rates on normal days. LPG is essential for us for making sand moulds, removing moisture, and for gas-cutting activities. Furnace operations have also been affected, and now much of our work has come to a halt
> **S Manjanna** | ALLIAGE METAL CASTING PVT LTD

HC seeks supply clarity

Bengaluru: Karnataka high court on Tuesday directed the central and state govts to clarify by March 23 the allocation, stock and other aspects pertaining to commercial LPG cylinder supply to Karnataka.

Justice Sachin Shankar Magadum gave this direction after hearing a petition filed by Bangalore Hotels' Association and others seeking a direction for uninterrupted supply of commercial LPG cylinders to hotels and restaurants in Bengaluru.

They claimed the abrupt action of authorities in halting supply of commercial LPG cylinders was arbitrary. K Sathish, counsel for the petitioners, submitted the decision to allocate 1,000 commercial LPG cylinders to the state does not meet its requirements, as Bengaluru city alone has about 40,000 hotels and restaurants. The court was further informed that around 6 lakh people working in these hotels are affected as some eateries have had to down shutters.

No cylinders issued, says hotels' assn president

Although 1,000 cylinders have been allocated for hotels and restaurants in the state, none has been issued so far, GK Shetty, president of Karnataka State Hotels' Association, told **TOI**. The association met chief secretary Shalini Rajneesh Tuesday, seeking intervention. A stakeholder from gas suppliers, who was part of the metting, said discussions are under way to revise the 1,000-cylinder limit. TNN

Hail pelts B'luru, north K'taka; IMD forecasts more storms

Times News Network

Bengaluru: Unseasonal rain accompanied by hailstorms swept across several parts of Karnataka, including north Bengaluru, Tuesday, bringing much-needed relief from the scorching heat but also disrupting daily life.

India Meteorological Department (IMD) scientists issued a forecast of thundershowers at isolated places in districts along with strong, gusty winds at a speed of 30-40 kmph till the weekend. CS Patil, scientist at IMD-Bengaluru, attributed the hailstorm to multiple factors. "There is a north-south trough extending over interiors of Karnataka besides discontinuity of winds. This apart, all districts have reported scorching heat over the past few days, resulting in intense hailstorms at isolated places of north and south-interior Karnataka districts.

In Bengaluru, parts of Sanjaynagar and Hebbal saw hailstorms in the evening. Sanjaynagar resident Madukar Raj told **TOI**, "I have seen hailstorms in the city before, but these were big ice cubes. We had hailstorms for close to 10 minutes and then good rain. I ran out just to see the cubes. It was nice to watch, though people travelling should take care."

Light-to-moderate showers lashed parts of RT Nagar, Hebbal, Nagawara, and Kammanahalli at night. IMD officials said there's possibility of intense thunderstorms between Doddaballapur and Chikkaballapur areas, including Kempegowda International Airport (KIA) as well. Despite the thundershowers, IMD officials said maximum and minimum temperatures in Bengaluru are likely to hover around 33°C and 21°C, respectively.

GBA helpline

Greater Bengaluru Authority issued a rain advisory following forecast of light-to-moderate showers across the city. The disaster management team urged residents to avoid travelling during heavy spells of rain, stay away from electric poles and trees due to safety risks, and avoid waterlogged underpasses. Citizens can reach out through the GBA helpline (1533) or WhatsApp number (94806 85700) in case of emergencies.

Pics: TOI, PTI

COOL BREAK: Unseasonal rain and hailstorms swept Karnataka, including north Bengaluru and Dharwad

Dharwad turns white with 4-5 inches of hail

Parts of Dharwad and Raichur literally transformed into an all-white landscape after 4-5 inches of hail accumulated on roads and agricultural fields. Youngsters in Kalaghatagi, Dharwad, were seen rejoicing on the streets. But traffic went haywire, with several buses and two-wheelers stopping midway due to the slippery surface.

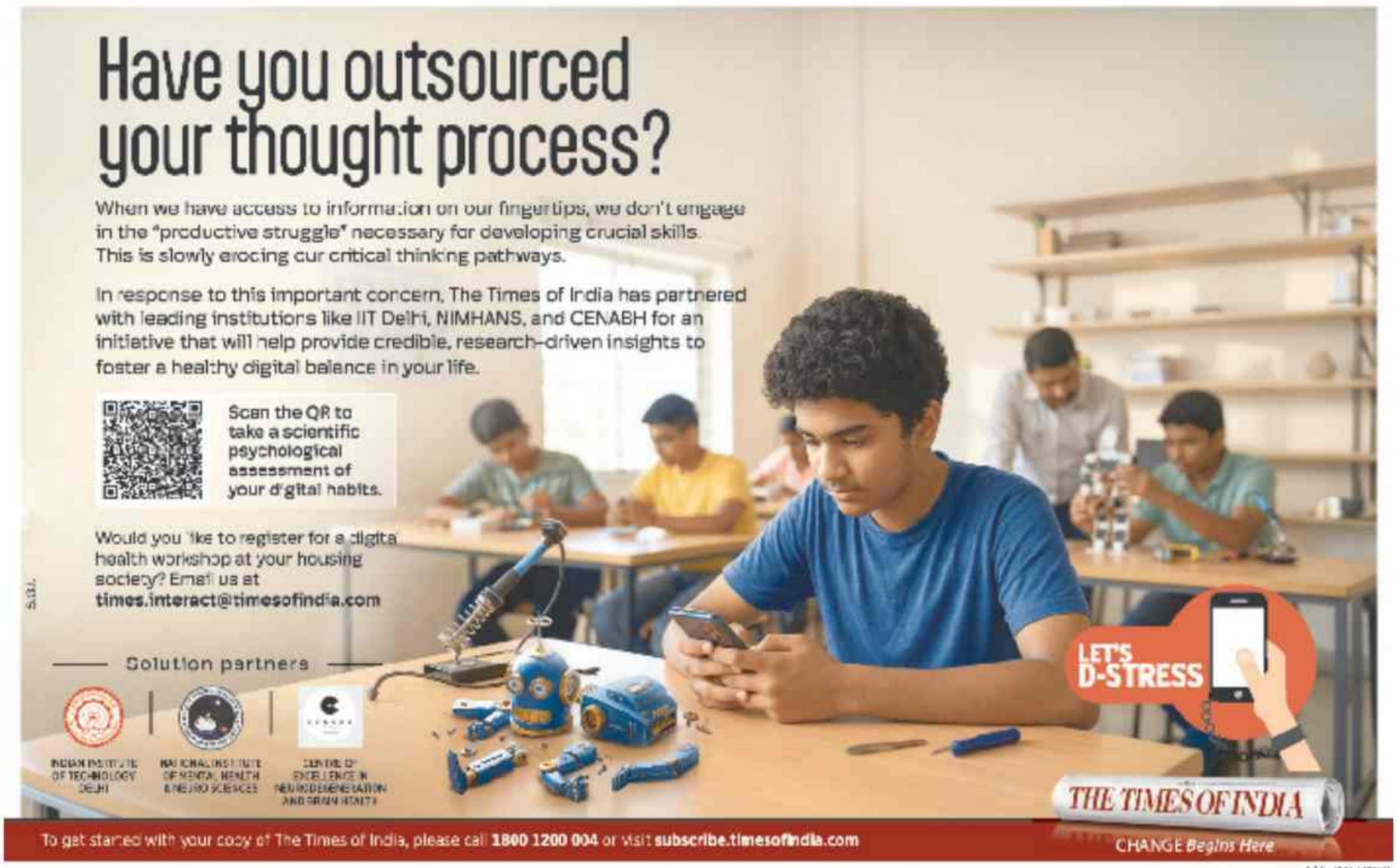
Hassan city reported heavy hailstorms and subsequently waterlogging and flooding of drains. Tragedy struck in Koppal district when 15-year-old Manjunath died after being struck by lightning while working in a field at Yelburga taluk. IMD authorities directed all districts to remain alert as hailstorms, lightning, and strong winds could pose risks.

Man, 22, bludgeoned to death with hammer

Bengaluru: A 22-year-old warehouse worker was allegedly beaten to death with a hammer by his friend at their rented house on the city's outskirts Monday midnight.

Police arrested the accused, Mohammed Nasarulla, 24, within three hours of the crime. The deceased has been identified as Kunal Kumar, 22. Both men were natives of Bihar. Nasarulla worked in the cold storage of a warehouse, while Kumar worked in another warehouse as a helper. The incident occurred around 12.30am. Primary investigation revealed Nasarulla was upset as Kumar had allegedly abused his mother and sister using foul language repeatedly over the past 15 days over some minor issues.

On Monday midnight, the duo got into an argument. Kumar again allegedly abused Nasarulla's mother. Enraged by the continued provocation, Nasarulla attacked Kumar with a hammer, fatally injuring him, and escaped from the house. Nasarulla was nabbed near KR Pura railway station while he was allegedly attempting to flee. TNN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Cop saves man from suicide attempt on Yelahanka rly track

Times News Network

Bengaluru: A head constable saved a man from attempting suicide on a railway track in Yelahanka Monday evening.

A resident of RMZ Galleria Apartments spotted the man lying on the tracks around 5.40pm, recorded a video and alerted the emergency helpline 112. The information was quickly relayed to the Hoysala Cheetah patrol, and head constable **Sridhar Murthy** responded immediately. After contacting the caller for precise location details and real-time updates, Murthy reached the spot by 5.50pm.

QUICK ACTION

On arrival, he found the man lying on the track and intervened without delay, asking him to get up. The man complied and moved off the tracks; he was heavily intoxicated. Murthy then counselled him, reassuring him that suicide is not a solution and encouraging him to open up about his problems. The man, identified as Suresh (name changed), a resident of Huvinayakanahalli near Begur, said he worked as a bike-taxi captain. He had earlier run a business but suffered heavy losses, leaving him with debts of around Rs 1 crore. Struggling with financial stress and personal issues, including separation from his wife, he had taken the extreme step.

A train passed on the track just five minutes after the rescue. Murthy contacted Suresh's elder brother and ensured he was safely sent home.

Senior officials lauded Murthy's prompt response, dedication and humane approach, noting that his timely intervention saved a life. They also commended the alertness of the resident who contacted the emergency helpline.

(If you are struggling or are having suicidal thoughts, help is available on Tele-MANAS Helpline: 14416 / 1800-891-4416, SAHAI Helpline: 080-25497777)

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SHORT TAKES

Amid anomalies claim, KPSC defers tests

Karnataka Public Service Commission (KPSC) has postponed personality tests to recruit 384 gazetted probationers' posts in Group A and B for 2023-24. It cited "administrative reasons" for the postponement. The tests and verification of documents were scheduled to be conducted for eligible candidates from March 23 to May 4. Revised dates and timings for the test will be announced soon on the commission's website, KPSC secretary Jyoti K said. Incidentally, some aspirants and BJP have alleged large-scale irregularities during these exams.

Fulfilled promise to cane farmers, says minister

Sugar minister Shivanand Patil said the govt has taken multiple measures to support sugarcane farmers and fulfilled its promise of providing Rs 100 per tonne assistance. Replying to BJP'sN Ravi Kumar in the council, Patil said: "If any govt has supported sugarcane farmers twice in the history of Karnataka, it is the govt of Siddaramaiah." He added, "Most issues you mentioned seem to favour factory owners. I am not sure whether you are speaking on behalf of farmers or factory owners." Patil said the govt is considering reviewing power purchase agreements with sugar factories and may enter new ones next year.

Govt faces heat from own ranks over doc shortage

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Bengaluru: The govt faced sharp criticism from both opposition and its own legislators in the legislative assembly Tuesday over the health department's transfer policy and alleged shortage of doctors and medicines in govt hospitals. BJP eventually staged a walkout.

Health minister Dinesh Gundu Rao came under severe flak with members questioning ground realities of services in rural areas and flagging gaps in community health centres (CHCs).

Defending the policy of counselling-based transfers, Gundu Rao said the move was aimed at ensuring transparency and reforms, while insisting there was no shortage of medicines in govt hospitals.

Initiating a debate on the functioning of the department, opposition leader R Ashoka alleged internal discord among senior officials and cited correspondence between top bureaucrats to question governance.

Pics: TOI

IN THE DOCK: Dinesh Gundu Rao in the legislative assembly

> "Transfers were made via counselling last year, and the process will begin from April this year," he said. "We have rectified errors. As for medicines, the govt released Rs 860 crore to procure them. Some 534 medicines were procured by Karnataka State Medical Supplies Corporation Ltd and 356 locally by hospitals. The tender process is on to procure another 216 medicines
>
> **Dinesh Gundu Rao**
> HEALTH MINISTER

"The health department is unhealthy," Ashoka said. "The principal secretary has not come to office for the past eight months. He has chosen to work from home. The secretary has filed a complaint against the principal secretary. The department is infested with indiscipline and misconduct. The minister has no control over his department."

Ashoka's colleague, CN Ashwath Narayan, alleged there are 4,922 vacancies against 7,173 sanctioned posts. "The govt's transfer policy has resulted in CHCs being virtually defunct as doctors including gynaecologists and anaestheticians have been transferred to hospitals much against their consent. Patients are in distress because of a shortage of essential drugs," he said.

'Unaware of realities'

Gundu Rao flatly rejected the allegations, but senior Congress member BR Patil contradicted the minister, saying there were no doctors in the CHC in his Aland constituency and that officials may have misinformed the minister. Congress's Mahantesh Koujalagi echoed the concern and suggested Gundu Rao was too focused on urban areas as he represents a Bengaluru constituency.

In reply, Gundu Rao insisted the policies were meant to make improvements and were based on experience.

Ashoka dismissed the reply as "bogus" and insisted he had letters from doctors highlighting shortages of medicines. He then announced a walkout.

Empty council irks Horatti, adds to govt's discomfiture

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Bengaluru: A day after assembly speaker UT Khader adjourned proceedings and walked out in a huff over lack of replies from ministers to MLAs, the legislative council witnessed a similar scene Tuesday, adding to the govt's embarrassment.

Council chairman Basavaraj Horatti briefly adjourned the post-lunch session — which began at 3.50pm — after finding only govt chief whip Saleem Ahmed and education minister Madhu Bangarappa were present in the treasury benches.

When the session resumed 10 minutes later, Horatti again asked how proceedings could continue without adequate representation from the governing party and asked what work members had attended, even suggesting adjournment till the next day.

BJP's N Ravi Kumar said members could not address the House in the absence of ministers, while Congress' Ramesh Babu said several members were at lunch and would return soon.

CM warns ministers

The development came even as CM Siddaramaiah issued a stern warning to ministers over delays in replying to legislators' questions. In a letter, Siddaramaiah directed departmental secretaries to immediately explain the delay and ensure pending replies are furnished within clear timelines.

GET RID OF LAGGARDS: A delegation of MLAs met CM Siddaramaiah on Tuesday and submitted a request, urging a cabinet rejig

He also asked departments to write separately to MLAs where responses are still pending. The intervention follows protests by opposition members, including opposition leader R Ashoka, who accused the govt of ignoring repeated warnings from the chair. "It has been observed that as of March 16, only 90 questions out of 245 have been answered," Siddaramaiah said. "This has not only caused embarrassment to the govt but has also undermined the rights of legislators and the dignity of the House," he said.

On Tuesday, Khader again directed officials to ensure replies are furnished within prescribed deadlines and presented department-wise data.

He said of the 22 calling attention notices to the department of personnel and administrative reforms, it submitted replies to only six, while the finance department gave six out of 33. Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes welfare department got nine notices but did not reply to any of them, as did youth empowerment department to its 10 notices. The cooperation department got 12 notices, all of which went unanswered.

Among others, water resources replied to 4 out of 33, urban development submitted eight out of 23, and the home department submitted 26 out of 35. The law department gave three out of five, tourism submitted one out of 25, and minor irrigation gave 13 out of 19. The IT department responded to both its notices.

No firms leaving over infra: Min

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Bengaluru: The govt Tuesday said no firm has left Karnataka due to poor infrastructure, even as the opposition flagged concerns over firms moving out. Replying on behalf of industries minister MB Patil, urban development minister **Byrathi Suresh** told the council, that the state continued to be a prime investment destination.

N Ravi Kumar of BJP countered the claim, pointing out that Toyota Kirloskar Motor had decided to set up a new electric vehicle manufacturing unit in Maharashtra instead of Karnataka, despite its existing base in Bidadi.

In reply, Suresh said, "Toyota's decision was primarily to do with expanding their footprint outside Karnataka. Their biggest manufacturing plant continues to be in Bidadi." He said neither Karnataka Industrial Areas Development Board nor the govt had any role in the firm's decision. To support his claim, Suresh said the high-level clearance committee had approved 2,028 projects worth Rs 5.1 lakh crore over the past three years, generating employment for over one lakh people.

"In the same period, KIADB has allotted 2,954 acres of land to as many as 1,440 firms," he said.

Raising a separate concern, Congress member Umashree said many newly announced KIADB industrial parks were struggling to attract industries due to inadequate infrastructure.

Suresh said the projects were being implemented in stages. "All of them will be developed in a phased manner," he said.

MLC slams govt for 'extravagant spending'

Former minister and BJP MLC H Vishwanathan criticised the govt for what he called "extravagant spending"and urged it to reduce unnecessary expenditure. During the debate on the budget, Vishwanath said the journey between Bengaluru and Mysuru by road would take hardly an hour for the CM, but special flights were being used instead. He also questioned the use of special flights to New Delhi and cabinet minister status to 149 Congress members.

IT and semiconductor parks in Belagavi

IT-BT minister Priyank Kharge said the govt has initiated steps to set up IT and semiconductor parks in Belagavi to boost jobs and regional growth. Replying to Abhay Patil in the assembly, Priyank said plug-and-play infrastructure, startup support and innovation programmes are being rolled out. He said land transfer has been sought from the defence ministry and a global technology centre is being planned at Tilakwadi.

No plan to shift PU control to ZPs: Min

Education minister Madhu Bangarappa said the govt has no proposal to transfer administrative control of pre-university education officials to zilla panchayats, amid lecturers' threats to boycott evaluation work. "I had clearly said we will never do it," Bangarappa said. He warned that boycotting evaluation would harm students' interests and urged dialogue.

₹810cr flyover on Mys Rd

Bengaluru: The govt has drawn up a detailed project report (DPR) to extend the flyover from Sirsi Circle junction in Chamarajpet, Bengaluru, to BHEL KIMCO Circle at an estimated Rs 810 crore.

Replying to Congress' K Shivakumar on steps taken to ease traffic congestion on Mysuru Road, deputy CM DK Shivakumar, who oversees Bengaluru development, told the council the DPR has been sent for administrative approval.

He said the project is part of broader efforts to decongest one of the city's busiest corridors. He said work on another flyover is underway near Rajarajeshwarinagar Main Road arch with land acquisition in progress. He also said road improvement work, including asphalting, from Rajarajeshwarinagar Main Road to Kengeri, via the arch stretch, has been largely completed at a cost of Rs 75 crore. Traffic on Mysuru Road has burgeoned, prompting the govt to push for long-term solutions. TNN

State to ramp up local fish supply

Pearl.DSouza@timesofindia.com

Bengaluru: Consumers may soon find more locally sourced fish on their plates, as the govt expands inland aquaculture by stocking 4.5 crore fish fry (newborn fish) across 38 reservoirs.

Officials said the move is aimed at boosting availability, with most of it meant for domestic consumption rather than supply to other states. Currently, stocking is underway in 38 of Karnataka's 83 reservoirs, covering nearly 46% of them.

These reservoirs together span about 95,000 hectares, with fish fry introduced at a density of around 1,000 per hectare to maximise output. The fry includes popular varieties such as catla, rohu, mrigala and common carp.

Karnataka has 522 registered fish farmers. The fisheries department also aggregates produce from private farmers, though officials said distribution of fish fingerlings depends on funding.

Mankal S Vaidya, minister for Fisheries, ports and inland water transport, told **TOI**: "Fry are sold at subsidised rates and farmers can rear fish in their own ponds."

Under the scheme, farmers can avail a 50% subsidy to procure up to 50 lakh spawns (10 lakh fish fry), with a maximum incentive of Rs 25,000. They are also eligible for a subsidy of Rs 2.5 lakh per hectare to rear fish in ponds near reservoirs and lakes.

The department is also in discussions with Cauvery Neeravari Nigama Ltd to set up a 20-acre fish fingerling production centre near Yagachi reservoir.

Moonshine flows in Raichur, govt vows crackdown

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Bengaluru: The govt is considering amendments to the Karnataka Excise Act to curb illegal sale and manufacture of liquor and is examining ways to bring such offences under the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (NDPS) Act.

Replying to Congress' Basanagouda Daddal, who flagged rampant illicit sale of liquor in Raichur, excise minister RB Timmapur said the govt is aware of the issue and stringent action will follow.

He said officials are conducting regular patrols on identified routes and checking vehicles on national and state highways. District-level committees chaired by deputy commissioners are reviewing enforcement measures, with cases being registered under provisions of the Karnataka Excise Act, 1965.

But Timmapur admitted the law is outdated and proposals are under review to strengthen enforcement, including bringing illicit liquor trade under stricter legal provisions. He said cases have been booked against those manufacturing spurious liquor using chloral hydrate powder in Raichur, while smuggling of liquor from Andhra Pradesh and Telangana via road and rail has also been detected.

Earlier, Daddal, who represents Raichur Rural, said the illegal liquor trade in border areas of Karnataka and Telangana involves "thousands" of people. Although officials are aware of the activity, culprits have not been punished, he said. Official data shows 13,550 litres of liquor was seized, 183 cases registered and another 102 cases have been filed.

Yet, Daddal said, the illegal trade continues to flourish. "The govt says it knows the people involved. They should immediately be externed from Raichur district and given harsh punishment. Youngsters are dying in accidents and people are being murdered. If the excise minister does not bring new legislation to address this issue, there will be anarchy," he said.

He said many youngsters are becoming addicted to alcohol and drugs because of easy availability.

Sharanagouda Kandakur of JD(S) alleged that in some border areas, some excise department officials are facilitating the supply of liquor. "We have a large migrant population in these areas, and farmers are also affected. I sincerely request the govt to stop this," he said.

METRO WRAP

Flyer hides ₹39-lakh hydroponic ganja in photo frame, in custody

Customs officials at Kempegowda International Airport (KIA) intercepted a passenger arriving from Bangkok and seized 1.1kg of hydroponic ganja, valued at Rs 39.4 lakh. The contraband was concealed inside a photo frame placed in the passenger's checked-in baggage. When the passenger landed at KIA on March 14, officials grew suspicious of the modified photo frame and opened it. They found a high-potency variant of cannabis inside the frame. The passenger was arrested under provisions of Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (NDPS) Act, 1985.

Leopard caught in Tumakuru

A nearly four-year-old male leopard that gave villagers sleepless nights for the last few days was caught by forest department officials at Sarthavalli, Tiptur, Tumakuru district. Following complaints by villagers that the leopard was attacking their livestock, particularly sheep and dogs, the department placed four cages in and around agricultural lands where the animal frequented.

SC adjourns Ranya's plea to March 24

Supreme Court Tuesday adjourned to March 24 the petitions filed by actress Ranya Rao and her associate Sakaria Jain, challenging the Conservation of Foreign Exchange and Prevention of Smuggling Activities Act, 1974 (Cofeposa) against them. They were booked under the Act in April last year on charges of trying to smuggle in 14kg of gold bars from Dubai.

HC refuses to quash rape case against govt school teacher

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Threatening the guest teacher with nude photographs, the accused allegedly raped her several times

Bengaluru: The high court has refused to quash proceedings against a teacher of a govt high school in Shikaripura, Shivamogga district, in relation to a criminal case registered by a guest teacher of the same school alleging repeated rape, criminal intimidation and other offences.

The petitioner sought quashing of the proceedings pending before JMFC, Shikaripura, registered for offences punishable under Sections 366, 376(2)(b), 376(2)(f), 376(2)(n), 323, 427, 504 and 506 of the IPC.

The case of the prosecution is that the petitioner used to call her inside the office room and sexually assault her. He also threatened to get her removed from work by complaining to the block education officer. He also clicked her nude photographs. By threatening to upload them on social media, he allegedly committed sexual intercourse several times by taking her to several places. When it became unbearable, she filed a complaint. Challenging the same, the petitioner argued that the alleged acts were consensual in nature.

However, Justice M Nagaprasanna noted that the threats to tarnish reputation and secure professional termination, if proven, unmistakably resonate with the language and spirit of these provisions. Section 376(2)(b) contemplates punishment where a public servant commits rape of a woman in his custody or subordinate sphere. The petitioner, being a teacher in a govt institution, and the complainant functioning under his administrative influence, prima facie bring the allegations within the ambit of this provision.

"Whether the statutory ingredients are ultimately established or not is a matter of trial. Section 376(2)(f) of the IPC punishes a person who commits rape upon a teacher or a person who has authority towards a woman. The position of the petitioner and the respondent-complainant would prima facie become the ingredients of Section 376(2)(f) of the IPC. The other is Section 376(2)(n) of the IPC, which punishes a person who commits rape repeatedly on the same woman. The complaint and the summary of the chargesheet narrate this act against the petitioner. Thus the complaint and the chargesheet cannot be said to be bereft of foundational substance," the judge added.

Granting the court's protection at this stage would downplay the seriousness of the allegations and unfairly halt the justice process. The alleged acts suggest a relationship marked by dominance, fear, and coercion, not mutual consent. Whether the allegations hold up will be decided during the trial, the judge noted while dismissing the plea.

KRV agitation derails SWR promotion exams

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Bengaluru/ Hubballi: Protests by Karnataka Rakshana Vedike (KRV) forced South Western Railway (SWR) to defer its departmental promotion examinations scheduled for March 17 and 18 in Hubballi. KRV members staged demonstrations in Hubballi, Bengaluru and Mysuru Tuesday, alleging the exams were being held only in English and Hindi without a Kannada option, putting Kannadiga candidates at a disadvantage.

Despite the protests, exams were held in Bengaluru division at a training centre near KSR Bengaluru railway station. A source said online tests were held for 149 promotional posts across departments such as commercial, electrical, mechanical and others.

SWR said the protests in Hubballi disrupted the entry of candidates and examination staff in some centres, leading to postponement of scheduled exams due to the prevailing situation.

Revised dates will be notified later, it said.

In a post on X, chief minister Siddaramaiah said Kannadigas are facing injustice in central govt exams. "Due to imposition of Hindi in the recruitment process across central departments, Kannadiga candidates have long been subjected to unfair treatment. This has occurred even when V Somanna is minister of state for railways. I had expected that he would stand up for Kannadigas and address this, but that expectation has not been fulfilled," the CM said.

He said Hindi imposition will not be accepted and sought the intervention of the Prime Minister, urging that exams be conducted with Kannada option.

LANGUAGE BATTLE: Police detain members of KRV during their protest against the railway department in Majestic Tuesday

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Human parcel: 5 try to 'courier' man in gunny bag

Rajiv.Kalkod@timesofindia.com

Bengaluru: A bizarre incident kept police on their toes Tuesday evening after a group of people brought an elderly man stuffed inside a gunny bag to a courier office and sought to deliver the "package" to Mangaluru.

The group of six, which included two women and the elderly man, went to the courier office located in Vinayaka Circle near Vyalikaval, close to Sadashivanagar, northwest Bengaluru, saying they wanted to courier something packed in the gunny bag. When asked by the courier agency staffers what was inside the huge gunny bag and where they intended to courier it, one of them opened it and out popped an elderly man!

ALL FOR A REEL!

- Family approaches courier office near Vyalikaval with gunny bag, asking it to be sent to Mangaluru
- Courier office staffers ask what was in the huge bag and where they'd like to send it to
- The family opens the bag and an elderly man pops out of it
- Agency refuses their request
- The family asks staffers why they were running the business if they cannot parcel the man in the gunny bag
- They demand money from the agency for wasting their time and efforts, before leaving in search of another agency
- Eyewitnesses say they were recording a reel on their phone
- Police trace the family and they confess they played a prank to highlight soaring prices of bus tickets

AI

Shocked, courier agency staff refused their request and asked the customers what was going on. When the staff told them a human could not be couriered, the group insisted: "But we want to courier him to another district." Instead of apologising for their prank, the group questioned the agency staffers why they were running the business if they could not courier the bag with a man in it. "They went to the extent of demanding money from the staff, saying they had wasted their time and energy. The group gave water to the man in the gunny bag and he drank it. They walked away carrying the bag, saying they would find another courier agency which will, for sure, agree to courier the man in the bag," a police officer said.

Some of the passers-by and neighbouring shop owners were seen peeping out and trying to understand what was happening. As police reached the spot and interacted with them, one of them revealed that some of those in the group were recording reels on mobile phones.

'Bid to highlight soaring bus ticket rates'

A police team checked CCTV footage from the courier agency and nearby shops and succeeded in tracing the group of people, who all turned out to be members of the same family.

A young woman confessed the family had played the prank and recorded a reel in a bid to highlight soaring bus ticket prices for travel during Ugadi and Ramzan festivities. She told police that she was upset as her aged father could not travel to Mangaluru because of high prices.

Police said no charges have been filed. "If the owner or manager of the courier agency files a complaint, then we can act sternly for the practical joke they played," an officer said.

Big ads to go, passengers to get better view of bus boards

Suchith.Kidiyoor
@timesofindia.com

Bengaluru: The Bangalore Metropolitan Transport Corporation (BMTC) has decided to discontinue full-body advertisements on its buses following repeated complaints from commuters.

Officials said passengers often found the large advertisement wraps to be an eyesore that spoiled the appearance of buses and made it difficult to identify services. Many commuters also pointed out that route numbers and destination boards became harder to spot when buses were completely covered with advertisements.

The BMTC has a fleet of 7,025 buses. To generate non-fare box revenue to meet rising operational costs, BMTC allowed the display of full-body advertisements (full bus wraps) on about 3,300 buses. For operating every bus, BMTC spends about Rs 85.4 per km, which includes fuel costs, maintenance, staff salaries, insurance, and other expenses.

As per the agreement reached earlier, a private agency was selected for the display of advertisements on 3,000 ordinary buses, generating about Rs 3.97 crore per month for BMTC. In another agreement, advertisements were displayed on 300 AC buses, earning the corporation about Rs 79.6 lakh every month.

A BMTC official said, "There were also objections to surrogacy advertisements, which are now completely banned. Some also argued that full-body ads could distract motorists on the road."

The official added that this was not the first time BMTC generated revenue through advertisements on buses, as such practices existed earlier as well. Another concern raised was that while removing the advertisement wraps, the paint on the bus sometimes peeled off. "As per contract terms, advertisers must repaint the bus after removing the advertisements," the official added. In the ongoing Legislative session, MLC HS Gopinath said full-wrap advertisements spoil the image of the BMTC and should be discontinued.

It is not only BMTC; even BMRCL, which operates Namma Metro, allows advertisements on train coaches on a limited number of its fleet.

Syed Asif

Commuters said other than full-body advertisements being an eyesore, they also block route numbers and destination boards

"No doubt advertisements generate additional revenue for BMTC. However, there were complaints that full wrap advertisements spoil the look of buses and dilute the branding of BMTC services. Considering these suggestions, advertisements will be limited to certain parts of buses — **Ramalinga Reddy** | TRANSPORT MINISTER

Of ₹1.2-L Cr Promised, Only ₹3,000cr Released For City: BJP

Drone overdrive, e-khata mess MLAs slam B'luru's governance

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Bengaluru: The tech capital's mounting civic and mobility challenges took centre stage in the legislative assembly, as BJP MLAs launched a sharp critique of the govt during Tuesday's budget discussion.

Raising concerns over issues such as the chaos surrounding e-khata issuance, alleged corruption in civic bodies, stalled infrastructure projects and administrative confusion following the restructuring of the civic body, legislators accused the govt of neglect and misplaced priorities.

They also flagged concerns over garbage management, warning that continued governance lapses could undermine Bengaluru's liveability and, in turn, affect the state's growth trajectory. Yelahanka MLA (BJP) SR Vishwanath slammed the govt for what he termed its continued apathy towards the growing apartment population, which has been demanding a new legal framework. He said apartment residents, driven by shrinking land availability and soaring property prices, are increasingly becoming a dominant segment in the city but remain neglected in policy decisions.

AT ASSEMBLY

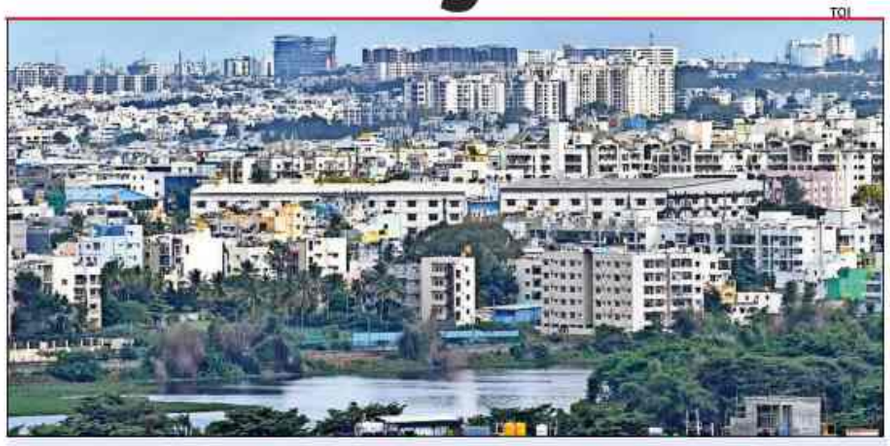
"Today, due to lack of space or high cost of land in and around Bengaluru, people are going in for apartments... Whatever the highest charges are levied on apartment dwellers... They have been demanding tabling of Karnataka Apartment Ownership and Management Act (KAOMA)... But for this govt, the apartments have become allergic and apathetic," Vishwanath said. Despite repeated appeals, the govt has not prioritised apartment management, leaving residents without a clear and updated legal framework to address governance, disputes, and accountability within apartment communities. He also questioned the govt's claims on city funding, alleging that while Rs 1.2 lakh crore was publicised for Bengaluru's development, only about Rs 7,000 crore was allocated and a mere Rs 3,000 crore released. He also took a dig at ambitious tunnel road project. With the project funded by a Rs 17,000-crore loan and a proposed toll of Rs 19 per km, he warned that daily commuters would face an unsustainable financial burden.

"When our citizens refuse to use paid toilet facilities that cost Rs 5, do you think they will use the toll tunnel road by paying thousands of rupees in one day?" he asked, while also objecting to the acquisition of parks and lakes. Calling Bengaluru as the heart of Karnataka, Vishwanath said: "If you do not take care of it, it will affect the whole state. It is not just 21 MLAs who should worry about it, but all 224 legislators must think about the development of Bengaluru as it fuels the state's growth engine. Already, the city has been fitted with a stent. But if you push it till bypass level, the city will only collapse."

Bommanahalli MLA (BJP) Satish Reddy criticised the use of drone surveys for property tax assessment, stating: "Some officials in GBA have introduced drone survey of properties for tax collection... But just based on drone images, officials have been asking people to cough up property tax retrospectively with interest and penalty. Drone cannot capture parking, balcony and stairs details. They cannot ascertain whether the building work is in progress or completed. The govt must direct the GBA that all drone survey of properties shall be verified with physical surveys by revenue officials."

Reddy also alleged widespread corruption in e-khata issuance and building approvals, claiming that citizens are forced to pay bribes for services that are officially free, with delays stretching for months.

TOI



Apartments await act, political timing clouds bill's future

The city's apartment residents are intensifying their demand for the long-pending Karnataka Apartment Ownership and Management Act (KAOMA-2025), as uncertainty continues over when the legislation will finally be tabled.

With the legislature session in progress and MLAs turning the spotlight on the challenges faced by the tech capital, members of Bangalore Apartments' Federation (BAF) hoped the proposed legislation would not be put on the back burner once again.

Residents said the urgency stemmed from persistent gaps in the existing Karnataka Apartment Ownership Act-1972, which they argue fails to address key issues such as redevelopment norms, dispute resolution mechanisms, and the powers and responsibilities of apartment associations. The absence of a comprehensive and updated legal framework has made governance within apartment complexes difficult, often leading to conflicts and lack of accountability, they pointed out.

According to BAF, the city has over 1,700 apartments and 3.5 lakh apartment residents, though the federation itself represents only a section of this population.

BAF president Satish Mallya said: "The delay in passing the KAOMA-2025 Act is leaving citizens struggling to manage their apartments, resolve disputes, and protect their ownership rights without a clear legal framework."

Kiran Hebbar, treasurer of BAF, said repeated delays in tabling the bill have made governance within apartment communities increasingly difficult. "When certain provisions are enforced while others are overlooked, it creates uncertainty. A timely and uniform implementation of the Act is essential for transparency and smooth functioning," he said. TNN

Man poses as customer, steals four gold rings

Bengaluru: In a swift act of theft, an unidentified man posed as a prospective customer and decamped with four gold rings worth around Rs 2.9 lakh from a jewellery shop on Begur Main Road Sunday, leaving the shop owner stunned.

Maruthi Jewellers owner Mangilal, in his complaint with Bommanahalli police said around 2.15pm, a man posing as customer entered the shop and asked to show him gold rings. Mangilal showed him several designs, which the man carefully examined by wearing them on his fingers.

The accused then created a distraction by asking to see more designs. As Mangilal turned around to take out more rings, the man allegedly seized the opportunity and fled the spot.

The miscreant was inside the shop for barely five minutes before executing the theft. Stolen rings include three white stone gold rings, a green stone ring, all together weighing over 21 grams.

ALMANAC (18.3.2026)

Meena Masa 4 – Shri Vishvavasu Nama Samvatsara – Uttarayana – Shishira Ritu – Tithi: Phalguna Krishna Chaturdasi h. 8-26 Nakshatra: Satabhisaj h. 6-09 then Purva Bhadrapada h. 29-21 Yoga: Sadhya h. 6-22. 28 Ramadan Kali Day 1872652
Rahu Kalam 12-1.30pm

— KL Vidya Shankara Somayaji

SSLC EXAMS START TODAY

Muthu P

Over 8.6 lakh students will appear for SSLC exams starting Wednesday. Students will write first language test — Kannada, Telugu, Hindi, Marathi, Tamil, Urdu, English and Sanskrit — in 2,871 centres across the state.

CM Siddaramaiah said: "On behalf of the govt and personally, I wish 8,65,988 students all the best. In case of low marks or failure, there is an opportunity to appear again, so no one should be discouraged or worry."

School education and literacy minister Madhu Bangarappa said, "To avoid burden on poor students, re-examination fee for those who fail have been abolished." The results are expected to be announced on April 24, but there is no confirmation as yet.

Varsity shines at youth fest

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Bengaluru: Kristu Jayanti deemed-to-be University students achieved several accolades at the 39th AIU Inter-University National Youth Festival, organised by Association of Indian Universities (AIU) from March 9 to March 14.

Kristu Jayanti deemed-to-be University qualified for the nationals for the first time in four events – Creative choreography, mimicry, solo instrumental (western) and group singing (Western).

The institution secured first place in solo instrumental (western), second place in creative choreography and group singing (Western) and third place in mimicry, competing against some of the finest student performers from universities across the country.

Offer of free notebooks under review: Min

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Bengaluru: The initiative of distributing free notebooks for govt school students from 2026-27 academic year, announced by chief minister Siddaramaiah at a state-level Teachers' Day celebration last year, is "under review," according to minister for school education and literacy Madhu Bangarappa.

Siddaramaiah had announced that notebooks will be distributed free of cost along with textbooks. Later, the same announcement was made by the state's school education minister at various public events.

GOVT SCHOOLKIDS

However, with no mention of the freebie in the state budget or in the call for intent for books for the next academic year, where schools had to give the number of books required, it was evident that free notebooks are unlikely be distributed. **TOI** had reported earlier that the announcement is unlikely to be implemented in schools.

Now, minister Bangarappa has made it official. Replying to a question in the legislative council during the ongoing session, he said the policy is "under review." When asked whether the announcement was on hold because the finance department had rejected the proposal, the minister said it is being examined at the govt level.

As per the Sept 2025 announcement, all students in 46,000 govt schools and 7,000 aided institutions were to get free notebooks along with textbooks from the 2026-27 academic year.

Books for remedial classes

Meanwhile, books for remedial classes – the Marusinchana programme – will be distributed only among students who have not achieved the expected learning levels.

Marusinchana was initiated in 2023 to help students catch up on age-appropriate learning levels. While initially all students were given the worksheets, it was later restricted to only a few students. The programme is being conducted for classes 6-10.

Drones enable lower cost per kilometre of delivery

▶ Continued from page 1

The blended wing-body tailsitter design of the drones combined vertical takeoff with the aerodynamic efficiency of a fixed-wing flight, thereby enabling lower cost per km of delivery compared to conventional ground transport.

Earlier, diagnostic samples used to be transported on three to four road trips daily. Dr Devi Prasad Shetty, founder and chairman of Narayana Health, said the model will be scaled up at its upcoming hospital in Banashankari, set to be inaugurated in the coming months.

While DGCA approval was obtained for the test flights, for operating services from Banashankari to Bommasandra, a formal approval is still awaited.

Naman Pushp, founder and CEO of the logistics startup said the pilot recorded zero failures so far. "Conventional logistics is primed for change. Our ambition is to build a new layer of infrastructure for commercial freight," he further added.

Commenting on the upcoming medical facility, Dr Shetty said: "This will be the first hospital in India to go completely paperless and smart. Only those directly involved in patient care will be on-site, while all other services will be handled remotely."

Woman donates liver to father

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

A woman donated a part of her liver to save her father, Ajjappa Patri, who suffered from liver cirrhosis. Ajjappa, a revenue department officer, visited a private hospital in Bengaluru, where doctors diagnosed him with non-alcoholic liver cirrhosis.

As his condition turned critical, his daughter Chandana, went ahead and donated 70% of her liver.

The lack of insurance coverage for liver cirrhosis made it difficult to bear the hospital expenses, the family said. They had to sell their three-acre land to cover the costs, but still owed money to the hospital.

Ajjappa told **TOI**: "My daughter saved my life. However, the private hospital where I was treated did not provide services under the govt health scheme."

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TIMES NATION

THE TIMES OF INDIA, BENGALURU | WEDNESDAY, MARCH 18, 2026

"NOTED YOUR CONCERNS; EXTEND MY GREETINGS ON EVE OF UGADI": SONIA'S BRIEF REPLY TO DEVE GOWDA

SALIM KHAN, HOSPITALISED LAST MONTH AFTER SUFFERING A BRAIN HAEMORRHAGE, DISCHARGED FROM MUMBAI HOSP

6 Ukrainians held for 'terror plot', Kyiv seeks quick release

US Nat'l Held Too, All Face Charges Linked To Terror

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

The Ukraine foreign ministry said Kyiv had sought immediate release of its citizens as there was no 'proven facts' yet to establish their involvement in illegal activities in either India or Myanmar

New Delhi: Ukraine has lodged a protest with the Indian govt over the arrest of its six citizens on charges of conspiring to carry out terrorist activities linked to insurgent groups active in the Myanmar border areas. An American national, too, was arrested by National Investigation Agency (NIA).

The Ukraine foreign ministry said Kyiv had sought immediate release of its citizens as there was no "proven facts" yet to establish their involvement in illegal activities in either India or Myanmar. A US embassy spokesperson said the mission was aware of the situation but would not comment on cases involving US citizens for privacy reasons.

The Indian foreign ministry has not commented on the issue yet. According to Ukraine, charges against the accused relate to their unauthorised presence in Mizoram — where entry requires a special permit — as well as their alleged illegal crossing of the state border with Myanmar.

"Contradicting long-standing international practices, the embassy of Ukraine in the Republic of India has not received official notification from the authorised authorities of India regarding the detention of six Ukrainian citizens. The Ukrainian side insists on immediate and unimpeded consular access to the detainees," said the Ukraine foreign ministry, adding that proper signage for areas where entry for foreigners is prohibited is often absent, creating a risk of unintentional violations of established rules. The Ukrainian ministry also accused some India and Russian media outlets of making baseless accusations.

"At the same time, certain media reports, particularly in some Indian and Russian outlets, contain distorted interpretations of the available facts, are of a manipulative nature, and make baseless accusations," said the Ukraine foreign ministry.

Kyiv also said details of the case were not being disclosed for the sake of the investigation. "With the assistance of Ukrainian consular officials... the citizens have been provided with legal aid and legal representation during the court proceedings. On March 16, 2026, a court hearing took place, which was attended by staff members of the embassy of Ukraine... however, they were not given the opportunity to communicate directly with the detainees," the foreign ministry said.

4 IAF-controlled airports to face temp shutdown

New Delhi: Four IAF-controlled civil airports will face temporary shutdowns. Runways at Jodhpur, Srinagar, Pune and Adampur airports will be recarpeted, civilian flights at these airports will be affected during their respective shutdown periods, **reports Surendra Singh**.

Starting with Jodhpur, the IAF has issued a 'Notice to Airmen' for runway recarpeting and, thus, civilian flight operations will remain suspended from March 29 to April 27. The runway recarpeting will be carried out in three phases. Airlines like IndiGo, Air India and Air India Express have already suspended bookings after March 28.

Srinagar airport will be closed on weekends from Aug through mid-Oct. Pune airport is expected to face operational disruptions later in the year. Adampur air base will undergo runway adjustments after Nov.

3% Goa's coast lost to erosion, 'stable coastline' reduces by 7%

Gauree.Malkarnekar
@timesofindia.com

A stretch is classified as a stable coastline when the rate of erosion not more than 0.5m a year or rate of accretion is not higher than 0.5m a year

Panaji: Of Goa's 193.9km-long coastline, there is a decrease in stable coast from 21% to 14%, with 2.7% of the beach area being lost to erosion, a shoreline change report of the National Centre for Sustainable Coastal Management (NCSCM), Chennai, has shown. This works out to only 27km of Goa's coast being stable.

The stable coastline is severely down from an earlier study done over the decade from 2004-06 to 2014-16 by ISRO's space applications centre, Ahmedabad. It showed that 116.7km of Goa's coast was found to be stable, one of the most stable among all states and UTs. As per the NCSCM definition, a stretch is classified as a stable coastline when the rate of erosion not more than 0.5m a year or rate of accretion is not higher than 0.5m a year. In stretches of Pernem, for instance, erosion of 0.7m a year was seen.

The shoreline changes have been found to be a combined effect of natural and human activities. The destablisation of sand dunes by human activities opens more areas of the coast for erosion. Chief minister Pramod Sawant, who is also environment minister, while tabling observations from the report in the recently-concluded assembly session, said that 50% of the 193.9km of coast of the state is sandy and the other 50% is rocky in nature.

He said that an increase in erosion is seen from 22% to 27%, which is 5%. In comparison, the accretion or growth of the coast accumulation of matter was only 2%, from 7% to 9%.

Eroding at eight spots, Cavelossim beach bore the impact at most locations along its stretch, as per the report. This was followed by seven in Baina.

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personal

CHANGE OF NAME

I, Ajay Kumar B (Old Name), S/o of Birbahadur Sharma residing at Shivanna Apartment 11th Door, 2nd Cross, Near Shobha Super Market, Rammana Layout, Byrathi Village, Kothnur Post, Bangalore 560077, Karnataka, India, changed my name from Ajay Kumar B to Ajay Kumar vide affidavit dated 07.03.2026, sworn before Notary, D.Rajanna. Henceforth, I shall be known as Ajay Kumar for all purposes.

I Bimla Devi M/O Kumar Amrit Ray, R/O 10/9, Aakash Vihar, Camp, Marathalli, Bengaluru have changed my name from Bimla Devi to Vimala Kumari Vide Affidavit no IN-KA06972171515723Y dated 12/03/2026 befor court of Bengaluru.

I, Anuradha J, W/o Saravanan L, R/o No. 3D, Radiant Park Apartments, 11th cross, 9th main, Maruti Layout, Bengaluru 560043 have changed my name to Anuradha J Rao, vide affidavit dtd. 16-03-26 sworn before notary Y.R Chandrasekar

I Gangadhar G S S/O, Somappa Gulannavar R/o No 7, Gurukrupa,13th Cross, Vinayaka Temple Street, Oil Mill Road, Aravind Nagar, Bangalore 560084 have changed my name to Gangadhar Somappa Gulannavar

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I, RAJAMOHAMMAD, S/o Imam Hussain, residing at Flat No A403,Sahasra Grand Appartment, Chelikere horamavu Bengaluru 45 , have changed my name to RAJMOHAMMED, for all purposes / forever / permanently vide affidavit dated 17/03/2026 sworn before Notary Lakshmaiah, at Bengaluru .

I, GURUKIRAN P, son of Prakash G P, residing at No. 121/89, 1st Floor, 3rd Main, 2nd Cross, Ashrama Road, Ranganathapura, Kamakshipalya, Bengaluru - 560079, Karnataka, have changed my name to UMAR FAROOQ and my religion from HINDUISM to ISLAM with effect from 18-02-2026.

I Ateeba Khan W/O, Javed Sheikh R/o 22a Vega Tower, Tata Aquila Heights, Hmt Layout, Jalahalli, Bengaluru 560013 Karnataka have changed my name to Ateeba Anjum Khan.

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3 lakh tonnes of LPG on 6 Indian ships stranded in Strait of Hormuz

New Delhi: Around 3 lakh tonnes of LPG loaded in six Indian-flagged ships is currently stranded in the Strait of Hormuz, the shipping ministry said on Tuesday. A second Indian ship, Nanda Devi, carrying 46,500 tonnes of LPG reached the Vadinar facility of Kandla Port on Tuesday.

Shipping ministry special secretary Rajesh Kumar Sinha said information on the remaining ships will be shared when there is any movement.

At present, there are 22 Indian vessels in the strait, including the six LPG ships, an LNG tanker, four vessels carrying crude oil, one loaded with chemical and products, three container ships, and two bulk carriers. Sharing the details, Sinha said the unloading of cargo from both LPG carrier ships Shivalik and Nanda Devi was under way.

The ministry said all central govt-owned ports are closely monitoring vessel movements and cargo operations and providing necessary support, including additional storage space. For example, VO Chidambaranar Port has provided around 90,000 sq metre for transshipment containers.

He said the congestion at Jawaharlal Nehru Port Authority was easing, with perishable containers reduced to 1,000. TNN

PM speaks to UAE prez, slams Iran hits

Consensus In Brics On Crisis Stays Elusive

Sachin.Parashar
@timesofindia.com

Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, PM Narendra Modi

New Delhi: PM Narendra Modi spoke to the UAE President, Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, for the second time since the war started in West Asia on Feb 28 and reiterated India's strong condemnation of all attacks on the Gulf country, which have resulted in loss of innocent lives and damage to civilian infrastructure. The talks took place amid reports of fresh attacks on the country's energy infrastructure by Iranian drones.

Modi said in a post on X that the leaders agreed on the importance of ensuring safe and free navigation through the Strait of Hormuz. "We will continue to work together for the early restoration of peace, security and stability in the region," he said, while conveying Eid greetings to the president. India has a critical energy partnership with the UAE which, according to Indian govt, is the fourth-largest source of crude and the second-largest source of LNG and LPG for India.

Apart from the safety and security of the Indian diaspora, India's immediate concern about the conflict is the impact on its LPG supplies through the Strait of Hormuz that is effectively blockaded by Iran. As the govt said earlier this week, India has chosen dialogue and diplomacy with Tehran to address its concerns instead of entertaining any thought about joining a US-led military coalition to secure the key waterway. The proposal for sending warships has found few takers among US' Nato allies in any case.

India is currently also engaged with the UAE, a BRICS partner, for a consensus in the grouping for a joint statement on the war. India, which hold BRICS presidency, reiterated on Tuesday that an agreement remained elusive for now.

"Look, we hold the Presidency of Brics. In this conflict, several members are involved, and it is difficult to bridge the gap in their positions. But we remain engaged with everyone," said the MEA spokesperson.

HC: Need restraint in times of conflict

Nagpur: Bombay HC on Tuesday disposed of a plea seeking assured domestic LPG supply after the Centre submitted that it is making "all possible attempts" to prevent hardship, **reports Vaibhav Ganjapure.**

"In view of the statements and considering that the situation has arisen due to the West Asia conflict, we are of the opinion that such a situation warrants a high degree of judicial restraint. During times of conflict, the court should not interfere with discretionary powers exercised by the executive in good faith," the Nagpur bench of the HC said.

'Af attack during Ramzan makes it all the more reprehensible'

▶ Continued from page 1

A Taliban spokesperson warned Tuesday that Afghanistan would retaliate, a step that could lead to all-out war between two countries.

Pakistan has denied targeting any hospital, saying it is only engaging military and terrorist infrastructure. "Pakistan's Armed Forces successfully carried out precision airstrikes on the night of 16 March as a part of Operation Ghazab Lil Haq, targeting Afghan Taliban regime terrorism sponsoring military installations in Kabul and Nangarhar," minister Attaullah Tarar said in a post on X. He said that the technical support infrastructure and ammunition storage facilities at two locations were effectively destroyed.

However, Kabul residents said Camp Phoenix, was an abandoned Nato military base in the city, that was converted into a drug treatment centre about a decade ago, and locals referred to it as Omid Camp or Hospital.

The Indian govt also said that the attack was even more blameworthy because of its timing. "That this attack was carried out during the holy month of Ramzan, a time of peace, reflection and mercy among Muslim communities across the world, makes it all the more reprehensible," a statement by MEA said.

Murder accused shot dead in 'encounter'

Bareilly: A day after a 38-year-old man from Bareilly allegedly killed his mother-in-law and brother-in-law and critically injured his 30-year-old wife in full view of those present, including his two minor children, during a panchayat convened to resolve a family dispute, he was shot dead in a "police encounter" early Tuesday, **reports Krishna Chaudhary.**

SSP Anurag Arya said, "We had been searching for the accused, Afzar Khan, after receiving a tip-off that he was hiding on the outskirts of the village and was armed. The input suggested he was planning to kill his wife. A team moved in to arrest him. When confronted, he opened indiscriminate fire, injuring two personnel. In retaliatory firing, Khan was killed."

Officials added Khan had previously been convicted of his uncle's murder.

Police said Khan's wife, Saima, had been staying at her parental home for the past two days following frequent quarrels with him.

The SSP added, "Saima's statement has been recorded before a magistrate and a forensic team has examined the scene. An FIR under BNS section 103 (murder) was registered late Monday."

Centre & Google oppose maintainability of SL judge's plea in K'taka HC

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Bengaluru: The central govt and Google have questioned the maintainability of a petition filed by a Sri Lankan Supreme Court judge seeking Karnataka HC's directive to expunge alleged defamatory content and news reports about him.

In his petition, Justice AHMD Nawaz of Sri Lanka's Supreme Court said the defamatory articles against him, published in 2015 and 2020, traversed beyond the shores of his country and inflicted grievous damage upon his international reputation as a jurist.

In its response, Centre — through ministry of electronics and information technology — questioned the territorial jurisdiction while Google said it could not be made a party to the case as the 'Google' search engine was controlled by US-based Google LLC and that the petitioner had wrongly impleaded Google India and Google Inc.

They also claimed the cause of action arose in Sri Lanka and Karnataka HC lacked jurisdiction to deal with it.

HC judge Justice Sachin Shankar Magadum directed the petitioner to modify the petition by naming Google LLC as a respondent. Google India has been deleted from the array of parties.

7 Steps to make your gas last twice as long

1. Use a *high fuel efficient gas stove.*
2. *Soak Dal* and *pulses* before cooking.
3. Always use a *pressure cooker* instead of open pot.
4. Use *small burner* for cooking up to *3 Litre* and *big burner* for *larger pressure cookers.*
5. As soon as the cooker whistles, *reduce the gas to low.*
6. **Follow the recipe and *cook for specified time.***
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EOI No.
GMDC/Power/EOI-01/25-26
18th March 2026

Submission Deadline
27th April 2026

Postal Submission
GM Power, GMDC Ltd.
Khanij Bhavan, 132 Ft. Ring Road,
Vastrapur, Ahmedabad – 380052
Email: gm.power.co@gmdcltd.com

Gujarat Mineral Development Corporation Ltd.
(A Government of Gujarat Enterprise)

SPOTLIGHT

Sitaram Jaipuria Foundation honours lifesavers at the third Medical & Healthcare Excellence Awards

The Sitaram Jaipuria Foundation (SJF) recently hosted the third edition of the prestigious Medical & Healthcare Excellence Awards at Hotel Taj Mansingh, New Delhi, presenting Rs 90 lakhs in awards to honour doctors for their outstanding contribution to the nation's health. Marking the birth centenary of Late Shri Sitaram Jaipuria, the event celebrated medical heroes alongside a scientific symposium on "Obesity, Diabetes, and Other Cardiometabolic Diseases."

Speaking on the occasion, Ashok Jaipuria, Chairman of SJF and Chairman & MD, Cosmo First Ltd., said, "Honouring my father Sitaram Jaipuria's birth centenary, these awards celebrate medical heroes and lifesavers advancing patient care, uplifting rural communities, mentoring tomorrow's leaders, championing women in medicine, and revolutionising diabetes care."

SITARAM JAIPURIA FOUNDATION
MEDICAL & HEALTHCARE EXCELLENCE AWARDS
CELEBRATING LIFE SAVERS
3rd Edition

WINNERS OF THE MEDICAL & HEALTHCARE EXCELLENCE AWARDS 2026 ARE:

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>> **Prof (Dr) Vinod Kumar Paul,** Member NITI Aayog & Former Professor/Head Paediatrics, AIIMS, New Delhi

Rs 10 Lakhs for Emerging Young Leader in Medicine and Healthcare Award

>> **Dr Sahajal Dhooria,** Additional Professor Pulmonary Medicine, PGIMER, Chandigarh

Rs 10 Lakhs for Exemplary Leadership in Rural Medicine and Healthcare Award

>> **Dr Himmatrao Saluba Bawaskar,** Medical Director Bawaskar Hospital, Mahad, Maharashtra

>> **Dr Sadanand Dagadu Raut,** Consultant Physician & Director Vighnahar Nursing Home, Narayangaon, Maharashtra

Rs 10 Lakhs for Smt. Gayatri Jaipuria Women's Medicine and Healthcare Excellence Award

>> **Dr Thara Rangaswamy,** Co-Founder & Vice-Chairperson, Schizophrenia Research Foundation (SCARF), Chennai

Rs 10 Lakhs for Shri Ashwini Kumar Award for Healthcare Excellence in Diabetes and Obesity Care

>> **Dr. Viswanathan Mohan,** Chairman Dr. Mohan's Diabetes Specialities Centre & Madras Diabetes Research Foundation

JURY

>> **Prof. (Dr) Nikhil Tandon,** Endocrinology & Metabolism, AIIMS

>> **Prof. (Dr) Pratima Murthy,** Director, NIMHANS

>> **Lt. Gen. (Dr) Velu Nair,** Head & Chief Consultant – Haemato-Oncology & BMT, Apollo Cancer Centre

>> **Prof. (Dr) Dorairaj Prabhakaran,** President-Elect, World Heart Federation; ED, CCDC

>> **Dr Sanjay Behari,** Director, SCTIMST

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>> **Prof. (Dr) Dorairaj Prabhakaran,** President-Elect, World Heart Federation; ED, CCDC

Ensuring good nutrition for a child is an investment for Viksit Bharat: Prez

Murmu Hails Akshaya Patra Foundation's 5 Billion Meals

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi: Ensuring good nutrition for a child is an investment in human capital, President Droupadi Murmu said Tuesday emphasising that children are not merely beneficiaries of the midday meal programme in schools, rather they are the architects of the nation's bright future.

Murmu was speaking at an event to commemorate the the milestone of serving 5 billion meals and 25 years of service to the cause by Akshaya Patra Foundation at Rashtrapati Bhavan Cultural Centre.

The President said that serving five billion meals in advancement of educational objectives is a remarkable achievement of the not-for-profit organisation.

As an implementing partner of the govt of India's flagship PM POSHAN initiative, Akshaya Patra has been serving fresh, nutritious meals to millions of children studying in govt schools across India.

Murmu added that theme of the event, 'From a Well-Nourished and Well-Educated India to a Developed India', underscores the significance of a nourished and educated society in realising the national resolve to build 'Viksit Bharat' by the year 2047.

PTI

President Murmu serves food to a group of children on Tuesday

In a symbolic gesture, the President also served food to a group of children. Education minister Dharmendra Pradhan, Akshaya Patra Foundation's founder and chairman Madhu Pandit Dasa co-founder and vice-chairman Chanchalapathi Dasa were present on the occasion.

"Children are not just beneficiaries of the free school lunch programme; they are the drivers of a productive, competitive future workforce to ensure a $30 trillion economy by 2047. Every meal is an investment in our nation's human capital, resulting in a healthy, educated youth demographic dividend that will contribute to the socio-economic growth of a new and developed India," she added.

Murmu commended Akshaya Patra for working continuously to address the issue of malnutrition among children and encourage them to pursue education by delivering mid-day meals to schools for the past 25 years.

Education minister Pradhan said, "Unless our children and youth are well-nourished, India cannot fully realise its potential."

Mamta Kalia wins Sahitya award for Allahabad memoir

Rajeev.Mani@timesofindia.com

The 86-year-old writer said that the announcement is one of the happiest moments of her life, as the book and the city hold a special place in her heart

Prayagraj: A literary tribute to the Sangam City, 'Jeete Jee Allahabad', has fetched the Sahitya Akademi Award for its author, Mamta Kalia. The announcement came as a surprise to the 86-year-old writer, who discovered the news only after seeing the official list of awardees. She will receive the honour in Delhi on March 31.

"It is one of the happiest moments of my life, as the book and the city hold a special place in my heart, capturing memories, friendships, and personal experiences associated with it," said Kalia, former editor of the quarterly English journal, 'Hindi', published by Mahatma Gandhi International Hindi University.

The writer recalled her deep connection with Prayagraj, where she lived with her husband, noted litterateur Ravindra Kalia, from 1970 to 2000, with both contributing immensely to its literary landscape.

During her time in the city, Kalia taught at Mahila Seva Sadan Degree College and remained actively engaged in literary circles.

Mamta Kalia's memoir vividly captures the cultural and intellectual life of Allahabad (now Prayagraj), weaving together personal recollections and the city's vibrant ethos.

She said the book originated from a request by a literary magazine to write about the erstwhile Allahabad. What began as an article gradually evolved into a full-length memoir.

Describing the city as warm, humorous and deeply alive, she noted that these qualities permeate her writing. Now based in Ghaziabad, she admitted she continues to miss the city.

Mission Shakti
Women Security
Women Dignity
Women Empowerment
Navnirman Ke 9 varsh

Rise of Prosperity
Golden Age of
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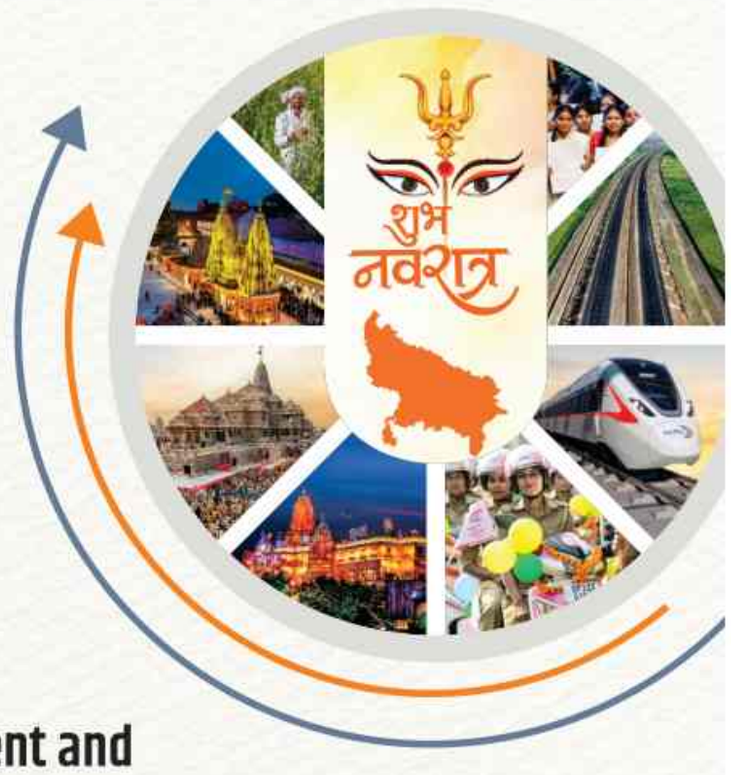


Marking 9 Years of
Unprecedented Development and
Sustainable Prosperity in Uttar Pradesh

Release of the Annual Book
Navnirman ke 9 Varsh
By
Yogi Adityanath
Chief Minister, Uttar Pradesh

In the august presence of

Pankaj Chaudhary
Minister of State, Finance, Government of India

Keshav Prasad Maurya
Deputy Chief Minister, Uttar Pradesh

Brajesh Pathak
Deputy Chief Minister, Uttar Pradesh

Suresh Kumar Khanna
Minister, Finance and Parliamentary Affairs, Uttar Pradesh

Surya Pratap Shahi
Minister, Agriculture, Agricultural Education and Agricultural Research, Uttar Pradesh

Baby Rani Maurya
Minister, Women's Welfare, Child Development and Nutrition, Uttar Pradesh

Ashish Patel
Minister, Technical Education, Consumer Protection, Weights and Measures, Uttar Pradesh

Sanjay Nishad
Minister, Fisheries, Uttar Pradesh

Om Prakash Rajbhar
Minister, Panchayati Raj, Minority Welfare, Muslim Waqf and Haj, Uttar Pradesh

Anil Kumar
Minister, Science and Technology, Uttar Pradesh

And other dignitaries

Date: 18th March, 2026 | Time: 11:00 AM | Venue: Lok Bhawan Auditorium, Lucknow

Highlights: Screening of the Documentary Film 'Navnirman ke 9 Varsh' | Screening of the Short Film based on the theme of Uttar Pradesh-Utsav Pradesh: 'Samriddhi ke Pravesh Dwar'

Cultural Reawakening
- The grand and divine temple of Prabhu Shri Ram in Shri Ayodhya Dham
- Transformation of the sacred city through the Shri Kashi Vishwanath Dham Corridor
- 66 Crore+ devotees took the sacred dip during the Mahakumbh

Robust Law and Order
- Zero tolerance policy against crime and criminals
- Eradication of mafia, ensuring a fear-free environment
- No communal riots or caste-based conflicts reported since 2017
- UP 112 police control response time reduced to just 6 minutes and 41 seconds

Transformative Development
- 7 Expressways operational, 15 more upcoming
- 16 Airports operational, 8 under construction
- Metro rail services in 7 cities - the highest in the country
- The country's largest airport ready in Noida

Governance Reforms
- Transparent, corruption-free governance
- Digitalisation of records
- Property ownership rights secured under the SVAMITVA Scheme

Youth Empowerment
- 9 Lakh+ govt jobs through a transparent recruitment process
- 3 Crore+ employment opportunities in private sectors/MSMEs
- Interest-free loans under the Mukhyamantri Yuva Udyami Vikas Abhiyan

Industrial Growth & Investment
- ₹50 Lakh Crore+ investment proposals received
- ₹15 Lakh Crore+ investments taking shape
- Boost to IT parks, AI, startup ecosystem, and data centre investments

Women Empowerment
- 'Mission Shakti' Abhiyan dedicated to women's safety, dignity, and self-reliance
- 'Mission Shakti' centres in every police station
- Mukhyamantri Kanya Sumangala Yojana nurturing every daughter
- Uttar Pradesh State Rural Livelihood Mission fostering self-reliance across rural communities

Agricultural Prosperity
- Leads the country in foodgrains, sugarcane, mangoes and milk production
- 3.12 Crore farmers benefitted under Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samman Nidhi, ₹99,000 crore+ transferred to bank accounts
- ₹3.15 Lakh crore+ distributed to sugarcane farmers, sugarcane price increased from ₹315 to ₹400 per quintal

Tourism and MSME
- Transformation of cultural-spiritual tourist spots
- 156 Crore+ tourists visited in 2025
- World-class temple museum underway in Ayodhya
- Rashtra Prerna Sthal in Lucknow
- 96 Lakh+ MSMEs operational
- One District-One Cuisine Scheme launched

Vikas ki Gati Apaar-Double Engine Sarkar
Information and Public Relations Department, U.P. | LIVE TELECAST DD NEWS & Youtube.com/DDNEWS | UPGovtOfficial | CMOUttarpradesh | CMOfficeUP

Odisha hosp fire alarm was off, staff ignored initial sparks, finds probe

Ashok Pradhan, Diana Sahu & Hemanta Pradhan | TNN

Bhubaneswar: A shut fire alarm and four wasted minutes between sparks being first detected in an AC duct and flames spreading across three floors led to the disaster at Cuttack's state-run SCB Medical College and Hospital early Monday in which 12 patients died, the state govt's fact-finding committee said Tuesday.

Based on the report, the on-duty hospital staff 's allegedly slipshod response to the crisis during the "critical window" – from 2.50 to 2.54am – was reflected in the fire services department not being alerted immediately about the blaze. "The staff did not take the initial sparks, detected around 2.40am, seriously. The fire station located on the SCB campus, barely 200 metres from the building housing the trauma ICU, wasn't the first to be contacted. Instead, a staffer decided to call the hospital authorities first, losing crucial time," a source said, quoting from the report filed by the fact-finding team led by development commissioner Deoranjan Kumar Singh.

By 2.50am, the trauma ICU was enveloped in flames. The next few minutes saw the fire coursing through the floors rapidly, killing 12 of 14 patients in two ICUs. Of the 23 patients evacuated, nine were from the second ICU in the same building. Neither the fire alarm nor the sprinkler system, which should have activated automatically, worked when needed. The harried staff attempted to douse the flames using portable fire extinguishers, losing precious minutes, sources involved in the inquiry said. "We are still looking into why the alarm was snoozed," the source said.

SCB Medical College had a firefighting system installed after Orissa high court issued an order on a PIL seeking safety measures.

14 youths held over boat Iftar, throwing biryani waste into Ganga

Varanasi: Fourteen Muslim youths were arrested Tuesday on charges of "defiling a place of worship and hurting religious feelings" after a video purportedly showing them holding an Iftar party on a boat and disposing of bones and biryani waste into the Ganga in Varanasi went viral, reports **Rajeev Dikshit**.

The action followed a complaint Monday by BJP Yuva Morcha city chief Rajat Jaiswal, who claimed the youths could be heard in the video "referring to Bindu Madhav Dharara temple in the background as Alamgir Mosque".

ACP (Kotwali) Vijay Pratap Singh said the 14 resisted arrest and tried to scuffle with cops when they were taken into custody from Gaighat area. They have been booked under BNS sections 298 (defiling a place of worship with the intent to insult a religion), 299 (outraging religious feelings), 196(1)(b) (promoting enmity on ground of religion) and other provisions.

"The viral video showed that some Muslim youths consumed non-veg food in the name of an iftar party while sailing in front of Bindu Madhav Dharara temple..... They later dumped the waste and bones into the river. The Ganga holds deep and unshakeable faith for followers of Sanatan Dharm. Thousands of devotees perform rituals and offer prayers using Ganga water," BJP Yuva Morcha's Jaiswal said in his complaint.

INDIA DIGEST

SC/ST Act sees more misuse than use: HC

Provisions of the stringent SC/ST (Prevention of Atrocities) Act are more misused rather than used for legitimate and genuine cases, Madras HC said, quashing a complaint entertained by TN SC/ST Commission against three police officers, including IPS Varun Kumar, who is DIG, CB-CID, Chennai. "It is high time for the State SC/ST Commission to be abreast of the law propounded by the courts before entertaining complaints so that the innocent common man is not unnecessarily dragged to go through the rigours of the penal consequences," Justice M Dhandapani said.

Only first 2 Vande stanzas acceptable, says Mizoram CM

Mizoram CM Lalduhoma told the assembly on Monday that the national song, Vande Mataram, could be accepted in the state only up to the second stanza, in line with the position accepted by former PM Jawaharlal Nehru. Lalduhoma, while addressing the question on if govt officials and students should remain standing while Vande Mataram is sung or played, said the first two stanzas were viewed as patriotic and not offensive to any religion. "However, the rest of the stanzas have religious connotations with praises of Hindu goddesses," he said.

Una flogging: Five convicts get 5-yr RI, but won't go to jail

Five men held guilty of flogging a Dalit family in Gujarat's Una taluka in 2016 were on Tuesday awarded five years' rigorous imprisonment under the SC/ST (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, 1989. Since the convicts have already spent more than five years in jail as undertrials, they will not have to serve the sentence, district govt pleader Ketansinh Vala said. On Monday, special judge J J Pandya of a Veraval court had acquitted 35 of the 41 people charged in the case.

BIGGEST EVER. BOLDEST EVER. PROGRESSIVE PUNJAB INVESTORS' SUMMIT 2026 CONCLUDES ON A HISTORIC HIGH

THE SUMMIT WITNESSED EXTENSIVE DIALOGUE BETWEEN GOVERNMENT AND INDUSTRY ON PROGRESSIVE POLICIES, EASE OF DOING BUSINESS, AND THE STRENGTHENING OF PUNJAB'S INDUSTRIAL ECOSYSTEM

The Progressive Punjab Investors' Summit (PPIS) 2026, held in Mohali, concluded on March 15 with resounding success, drawing strong participation from leading national and international industry leaders. The summit highlighted Punjab's rising prominence as a preferred investment destination, showcasing its investor-friendly policies, robust infrastructure, and commitment to industrial growth. During the summit, top executives and thought leaders from sectors including manufacturing, renewable energy, textiles, and innovation reaffirmed their confidence in the state's economic potential while announcing significant fresh investments that promise to boost employment, drive technological advancement, and further strengthen Punjab's industrial landscape.

Leading industry representatives reaffirmed their confidence in Punjab's industrial growth trajectory and investor-friendly policy environment. Industry leaders including Lakshmi N. Mittal, Executive Chairman, ArcelorMittal; T.V. Narendran, CEO & Managing Director, Tata Steel; Sajjan Jindal, Chairman & Managing Director, JSW Group; Sunil Kant Munjal, Chairman, Hero Enterprise; Madhav Singhania, Joint Managing Director & CEO, JK Cement; and Rajinder Gupta, Chairman Emeritus, Trident Group, expressed strong confidence in Punjab's improving industrial ecosystem and governance reforms.

During the session, industry leaders announced fresh investment commitments across manufacturing, renewable energy, and emerging sectors. Verbio announced an investment of ₹3,000 crore for the development of 10 industrial plants in partnership with a Japanese partner and a major Indian gas producer. Plaksha University announced plans to invest ₹5,000 crore over the next few years for expansion of its research and innovation ecosystem. Oswal Group and Tynor Orthotics each announced investments of ₹1,000 crore, while Ganga Acrowools announced an investment of ₹750 crore toward expansion of manufacturing operations.

The valedictory session marked the conclusion of PPIS 2026, reaffirming Punjab's growing attractiveness as an investment destination and the state government's continued commitment to facilitating industry growth, innovation, and employment generation.

UPCOMING INVESTMENTS

- Trident (Textiles) – **₹5000 Cr**
- Plaksha (Education) – **₹5000 Cr**
- Vardhman Steel (Steel) – **₹3600 Cr**
- Verbio India (Biofuel / Renewable Energy) – **₹3500 Cr**
- Tata Steel (Steel) – **₹3200 Cr**
- JSW (Steel) – **₹3000 Cr**
- HMEL (Petroleum & Energy) – **₹2600 Cr**
- Nahar Group (Textile) – **₹1550 Cr**
- IOL Chemicals & Pharmaceuticals (Pharma) – **₹1400 Cr**
- Tynor Orthotics (Healthcare Manufacturing) – **₹1000 Cr**
- Happy Forging (Auto Component) – **₹1000 Cr**
- Fortis (Healthcare) – **₹950 Cr**
- Veerka Beverages (Food Processing) – **₹987 Cr**
- Ganga Acrowool (Textile) – **₹750 Cr**
- Amber Enterprises (Consumer Goods) – **₹500 Cr**
- Mrs Bector's (Food Processing) – **₹400 Cr**
- Toppan Speciality Films (Packaging) – **₹400 Cr**
- Infosys (IT) – **₹290 Cr; 7000 Jobs**

"Punjab is on a new growth path. We worked for a year to organise this summit. We have always placed the interests of the state and its people first. If Punjab progresses, the country progresses. The state government will review the progress of investment proposals discussed at the Progressive Punjab Investors' Summit after six months."

— Bhagwant Singh Mann
Chief Minister, Punjab

AT A GLANCE

The Progressive Punjab Investors' Summit 2026 has signaled a departure from traditional "MoU-driven" summits, focusing instead on what Chief Guest Arvind Kejriwal termed a "scientific analysis" of industrial growth. With the theme "Policy to Practice," the administration highlighted that ₹1.57 lakh crore of investment is already active on the ground, creating an estimated 5 lakh jobs. Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann characterised this phase as the state "turning off the seatbelt signs" for an industrial takeoff, moving beyond the legacy of stagnation to a future where Punjab competes with global manufacturing hubs like China.

In a bold move to eliminate government interference, the Punjab government has institutionalised a 45-day digital clearance guarantee. Through the FastTrack Punjab Portal, if a department fails to grant approval within 45 working days, the system automatically generates a "Deemed Approval" on the 46th day. For MSMEs with investments up to ₹125 crore, the "Right to Business Act" allows operations to commence within 5 to 18 days based on self-certification, a reform that is unmatched across India.

Sustainability emerged as a core pillar of the summit, with Tata Steel CEO T.V. Narendran announcing that their Ludhiana plant will produce steel with a CO_2 footprint of just 0.2 to 0.25 tons, making it one of the cleanest in the world. This aligns with Industries Minister Sanjiv Arora's ambitious target to flip the state's energy mix from 15% green to 85% renewable energy within the next eight years. Anchor investors like Verbio are supporting this transition with a ₹3,000 crore commitment for 10 biofuel plants across the state.

Hosting the summit at Plaksha University, a CEO-led institution, underscored the state's focus on "future-ready education." With 130 business leaders contributing capital and expertise, the campus serves as a model for the convergence of technology and industry. The government is mirroring this spirit by increasing startup seed grants to ₹5 lakh and scaling grants to ₹15 lakh, aiming to position Mohali as the "Silicon Valley of North India." Chief Minister Bhagwant Singh Mann noted that the Punjabi spirit of "jugaad"—now rebranded as innovation—is the state's true competitive edge. The government has decided to set up a new epicenter and innovation hub at Kalkat Bhawan, Mohali, near the International Airport, which will be the new address for startups.

PICS AND DATA BY DIPR, PUNJAB

First row (left to right audience view): Sunil Kant Munjal – Hero Enterprise; T. V. Narendran – Tata Steel; Lakshmi N. Mittal – ArcelorMittal; Sajjan Jindal – JSW Group; Vikramjeet Singh Sahney – Member of Parliament; Ashok Mittal – Member of Parliament; Rajinder Gupta – Trident Ltd.; Nivruti Rai – Invest India; Madhav Singhania – JK Cements; **Second row (left to right):** Sunil Kumar Dhareshwar – Infosys; Ravinder Balain – Cargill India; Neeraj Aggarwal – Boston Consulting Group; Dr. Amrit Sagar Mittal – Sonalika; Hiroshi Isshiki – Yanmar Pvt. Ltd.; Gi No Park – Sunjin; Fumio Yamazaki – Embassy of Japan; Harjinder Kang – UK Government; Eui-jin Chon – Embassy of Republic of Korea; Kamal Oswal – Nahar Spinning Mills and Sachit Jain – Vardhman Special Steels

Strategic industry engagements take centre stage at PPIS 2026

PPIS 2026 SESSIONS SHOWCASED PUNJAB'S DIVERSE INDUSTRIAL STRENGTHS, HIGHLIGHTING OPPORTUNITIES ACROSS MANUFACTURING, TECHNOLOGY, MSMES, AND EMERGING SECTORS, WHILE REINFORCING THE STATE'S POSITION AS A PREFERRED INVESTMENT DESTINATION

The three-day Progressive Punjab Investors Summit (PPIS) 2026, held from March 13–15, witnessed extensive sectoral deliberations with participation from industry leaders, policymakers, and domain experts across manufacturing, technology, and emerging sectors.

Over the course of the three-day summit, more than 30 sessions were organised, providing a platform for discussions on sector-specific opportunities, policy support, and investment potential in Punjab.

The summit featured five plenary sessions on key themes shaping the state's economic future—Brand Mohali, Exports & Logistics, MSMEs, Artificial Intelligence, and Academia & Research. In addition, three partner country sessions with the United Kingdom, Japan, and the Republic of Korea highlighted opportunities for international collaboration, technology partnerships, and industrial investments.

Sectoral sessions were organised across a wide range of industries, including textiles, aerospace & defense, bicycles, start-ups, heavy machinery, renewable energy, agri & food processing, plastics, sports goods, steel, logistics, electric vehicles & auto components, tourism, healthcare, pharmaceuticals, electronics system design & manufacturing (ESDM), and artificial intelligence. A Global Capability Centres (GCC) roundtable was also organised to explore Punjab's potential as a destination for global technology and services operations.

The final day featured focused discussions on MSMEs, media & entertainment, IT/ITeS, and furniture manufacturing, culminating in the valedictory session, where industry leaders reaffirmed strong confidence in Punjab's growing industrial ecosystem and investment potential.

Collectively, the sessions highlighted Punjab's strengths as a diversified manufacturing hub and an emerging destination for technology-led investments while emphasising innovation, export growth, and employment generation as key drivers of the state's industrial growth.

KEY HIGHLIGHTS:

- **PPIS 2026 (Mar 13–15):** Participation of industry leaders, policymakers and experts.
- **30+ Sessions:** Focused on sector opportunities and investments.
- **Plenary & Global Sessions:** Themes of Brand Mohali, MSMEs and AI; UK, Japan and Korea collaborations.
- **Diverse Sectors:** Textiles, EVs, renewable energy, healthcare, ESDM, startups, and more.
- **Valedictory Insights:** Strong investor confidence; Punjab emerges as a manufacturing and tech hub.

Investors' Summit draws 6,000+ delegates, showcases industrial and emerging sectors

THE SUMMIT HIGHLIGHTED PUNJAB'S MANUFACTURING, MSMES, AND EMERGING SECTORS, ATTRACTING GLOBAL PARTNERS AND REPOSITIONING ITS STATUS AS A PREFERRED INVESTMENT HUB

The Progressive Punjab Investors' Summit (PPIS) 2026 at Plaksha University, Mohali, witnessed participation from over 6,000 delegates. The summit served as a convergence point for established global corporations as well as emerging enterprises, reflecting Punjab's growing stature as an attractive investment destination.

The summit saw participation from partner countries Japan, the United Kingdom, and the Republic of Korea, while also attracting engagement from countries including Finland, Singapore, the Czech Republic, the Netherlands, and Russia, highlighting the expanding global footprint of Punjab's investment outreach. The summit reaffirmed Punjab's commitment to translating investment intent into actionable partnerships and strengthening its position as a preferred destination for global industry.

The three-day summit aimed to showcase Punjab's industrial strengths, progressive policy framework, infrastructure readiness, and emerging sectoral opportunities, while facilitating partnerships between government and industry to accelerate economic growth, attract investments, and generate employment opportunities for the youth of the state.

The session featured participation from Dr. Rudra Pratap, Founding Vice Chancellor, Plaksha University; Kamal Oswal, Chairman & Managing Director, Nahar Group; Rutger Oudejans, Managing Director, DeHeus India; Dr. P.J. Singh, Managing Director, Tynor Orthotics; Varun Khanna, Chairman and Managing Director, Yanmar India; Ajay V. Dattani, Joint Managing Director, Sanathan Textiles; Amit Jain, Managing Director, Shingora Textiles; Amit Thapar, President, Ganga Acrowools; Gagan Khanna, Chairman & Managing Director, Arisudana Industries; Jagminder Singh Bawa, President and Head of Operations India, Vibracoustic; Ashish Kumar, Managing Director, Verbio; and Neel Augusthy, Finance Director, Nutrica International.

During the session, the government also talked about the Industrial and Business Development Policy 2026, which is designed to make Punjab more competitive by helping investors, speeding up approvals, providing infrastructure support, and offering specific incentives to boost manufacturing, MSMEs, and new industries.

Trinamool drops 74 MLAs; it's Didi vs Suvendu in Bhowanipore

Targets 226 Seats In 294-Member State Assembly

Tamaghna.Banerjee
@timesofindia.com

TOI

CM Mamata flashes a victory sign after announcing the full list of candidates for Bengal legislative assembly polls in Kolkata, Tuesday

Kolkata: Trinamool Congress unveiled Tuesday a 291-candidate slate for April 23 and 29 polls in Bengal, anchoring its campaign around CM Mamata Banerjee in Bhowanipore and a target of 226 seats in the 294-member assembly, while urging opposition parties to back TMC to "completely rout" BJP.

"This is a battle against BJP. Boycott BJP, ensure no vote for BJP. I appeal to other political parties as well — vote for Bengal. Vote for TMC... This is a fight to protect Bengal's identity, address and asmita (self-respect). BJP has no chance here," Banerjee said after reading out names and handing the list to party national general secretary Abhishek Banerjee.

Three Darjeeling seats were left for ally Bharatiya Gorkha Prajatantrik Morcha.

Ticket distribution leaned on experience while signalling a churn: 135 sitting MLAs retained, 74 dropped. Those omitted include Paresh Pal, Vivek Gupta, former cricketer Manoj Tiwari, actors Chiranjeet and Kanchan Mallick, and ministers Tajmul Hossein and Jyotsna Mandi. Former education minister Partha Chattopadhyay did not feature.

"Some old and dedicated workers had to be left out to accommodate new faces... those who could not make it this time should not lose heart," Banerjee said.

The cabinet continuity remained broad, with a few seat shifts such as Sovandeb Chattopadhyay. Tickets went to relatives of senior functionaries — Kalyan Banerjee's son Sirsanya and Sadhan Pande's daughter Shreya — and to Vasundhara, daughter of former Left Front minister Kshiti Goswami. TMC spokesperson Kunal Ghosh entered an assembly fray for the first time from Beliaghata. Heptathlete Swapna Barman and former cricketer Shibshankar Paul added star appeal.

Abhishek Banerjee said focus was on youth: 177 candidates are under 60, including 42 under 40, while 52 nominees are women.

The campaign pitch sharpened around "2026-e 226", with attacks on BJP as a "basanter kokil (springtime cuckoo)" that appears only during elections.

CM Banerjee targeted EC over central forces. "Bengal has been targeted... deploying forces inside polling booths is illegal. EC is acting under BJP's instructions with political bias. This is 'Tughlaqi Raj'," she said, while expressing confidence: "EC and Centre can take away power, but they cannot take away people's support... May 4 aayega, BJP jayega."

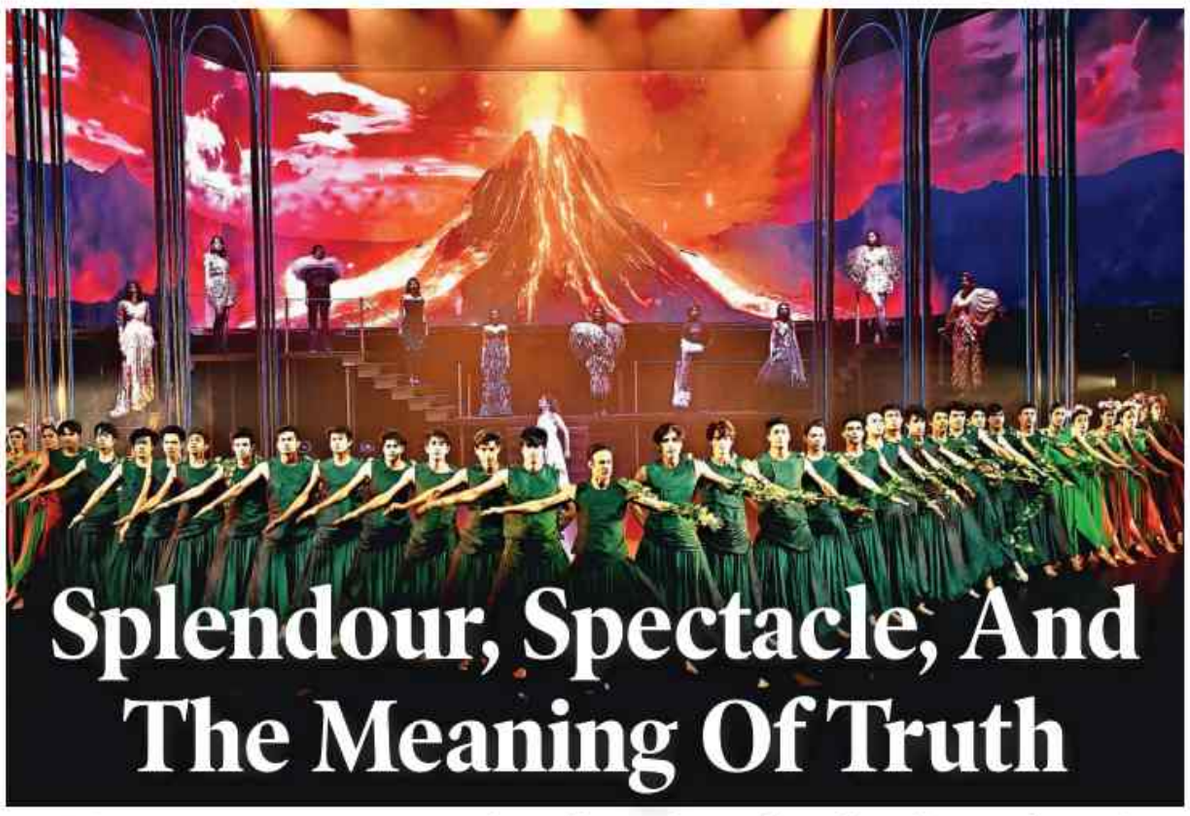
Battle lines crystallised in Bhowanipore in central Kolkata, where Banerjee will face assembly opposition leader Suvendu Adhikari of BJP, who is also contesting from Nandigram. "This fight is not just mine but our party's fight and we will win Bhowanipore by the highest possible margin," she said.

Banerjee has never lost Bhowanipore, winning the 2011 bypolls by 54,213 votes, 2016 by 25,301, and the 2021 bypolls by 58,835 after her narrow 1,956-vote defeat to Adhikari in Nandigram. TMC retained Bhowanipore in 2021 through Sovandeb Chattopadhyay with a 28,719 margin.

The seat enters polls with altered contours.

Electoral roll has shrunk by about 20% after deletion of 41,068 names.

(With inputs from Dipawali Mitra & Suman Mandal)



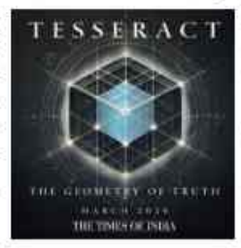
Splendour, Spectacle, And The Meaning Of Truth

Tesseract is a spectacular show, but also deeply profound

Suvir Saran

Inside the hushed, hallowed hall of Mumbai's Jamshed Bhabha Theatre, a curious and quietly courageous thing occurred. A newspaper — that daily dispenser of declarations — invited its readers not merely to believe it, but to think with it. Not simply to consume truth, but to chase it.

Tesseract: The Geometry of Truth arrived with the promise of spectacle, and spectacle it delivered — dancers dazzling, music mounting, light leaping across the stage like lightning in a philosophical storm. But what lingered long after the applause subsided was not simply the splendour. It was the suggestion beneath the shimmer:



Truth is not a trophy handed down.

Truth is a task taken up.

I went to the theatre with Joyce Arora, who for years worked in the marketing and sales team of the Indian Express — someone who understands the ecosystem of newspapers from the inside, the delicate dance between editorial ambition and the practical machinery that keeps a newsroom alive. Joyce is also the mother of two women who have become forces of nature in their own right — Malaika Arora and Amrita Arora. Yet the Joyce I know is not one drawn to flashbulbs and fanfare. She, like me, prefers the anonymity of the audience — the quiet privilege of sitting unseen while ideas take the stage.

The truth is we went for a friend.

Our scribe friend from the Times of India, Vinay Mishra, had invited us. And insisted. And reminded. The sort of gentle persistence only journalists possess — the belief that a story matters enough to pursue. Joyce and I finally said yes because we trusted him.

How lucky we are that we did.

Because what Vinay brought us to witness was not merely a performance. It was a provocation.

The evening opened with grace. Meera Jain stepped onto the stage to welcome the audience, her voice calm, composed, quietly compelling. Behind her stood Samir Jain, not rushing to speak but choosing instead to defer to the voice that carried the room. In a world where power so often clamours for centre stage, the moment felt quietly radical.

Meera spoke of travel and theatre, of Broadway evenings and family journeys, of curiosity kindled across continents. It became clear that the inspiration for this ambitious production was born from experiences shared by the Jain family — the simple joy of watching stories unfold on stages across the world and the desire to bring that wonder home.

And here is where the conversation becomes interesting.

We live in an age addicted to accusation. Labels leap from lips faster than understanding. Someone is dismissed as elitist, someone else derided as entitled, another declared woke, another condemned as fascist. We fling these words like stones and call it discourse.

But sitting in that theatre, listening to Meera Jain speak, something else came into focus.

Yes, travel is privilege. Yes, exposure to global theatre is advantage. But what matters — what always matters — is what one chooses to do with privilege.

The Jain family could have kept those experiences to themselves. They could have continued travelling, watching theatre abroad, enjoying it privately, quietly, comfortably.

Instead, they chose to build something here.

They chose to bring that inspiration back to Mumbai and share it with thousands of strangers.

That decision transforms privilege into something rarer.

It becomes a gift.

And what a gift it was.

When the lights dimmed and the stage awakened, the theatre seemed to inhale collectively. Nearly a hundred dancers surged into motion — bodies blazing with purpose, patterns pulsing with precision. Screens shimmered like celestial windows, colours cascaded like cosmic confetti, and music rose with a rhythm that felt both ancient and urgent.

At one electrifying moment the chorus lifted a line into the hall:

"Seek the light beyond the noise."

The lyric landed like a lighthouse beam cutting through fog. In an era overwhelmed by information — opinions, algorithms, accusations — clarity feels like a rare and radical act.

Then the tempo softened.

A quieter refrain floated through the theatre:

"Listen to the silence between the seconds."

And suddenly the room stilled.

The choreography throughout the performance was astonishing — dancers darting, dissolving, and reassembling like living constellations. At times they resembled philosophers circling each other in debate. At others they became journalists wrestling with the restless roar of modern information.

Technology amplified the vision — vast LED environments unfolding like digital galaxies, immersive soundscapes swelling and subsiding like philosophical tides. Yet the beating heart of the production remained unmistakably human.

Breath.

Bone.

Body.

Photos: Uma Kadam

(The article is reproduced with permission from The Indian Express.)

On Day 3 of reshuffles, poll panel shakes up Bengal police

Bharti Jain, Kaushik Pradhan & Tamaghna Banerjee | TNN

New Delhi/Kolkata: Continuing its administrative and police shake-up in assembly poll-bound states, Election Commission on Tuesday replaced additional directors general (ADGs) of South Bengal and North Bengal regions, four police commissioners, a deputy commissioner and a dozen SPs in West Bengal. In Kerala, it directed the appointment of an IAS officer and two Kerala Administrative Service (KAS) officers as district election officers (DEOs), and two IPS officers as district police chief and DIG.

The changes in Bengal, including that of chief secretary, home secretary, DGP and Kolkata Police commissioner earlier, prompted CM and TMC chief Mamata Banerjee to say, "Remember, every officer ultimately belongs to the system. Even after the election is declared, an elected govt continues to remain in place and they will ultimately work for us."

"You have changed everyone. What will happen if a disaster strikes now? Chief secretary, commissioners of police and others who had experience and an understanding of the ground situation have been removed. If there is any breakdown in law and order, then the responsibility will have to be borne by EC," she told reporters while announcing TMC's candidate list. EC was operating from the shadows to help BJP, she alleged, saying, "Is there an intention to incite unrest? Is there any plan to trigger something ahead of Eid?"

BATTLEGROUND WEST BENGAL

EC has said that it has carried out the transfers in pursuance of its objective to ensure elections free of intimidation, violence and inducements. It said the shunted officers had been barred from any poll-related assignments.

The poll panel on Tuesday also deployed 1,111 central observers for the assembly polls in Bengal, Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Assam and Puducherry as well as bypolls in eight seats. Among them was Bengal's former home secretary J P Meena, who was replaced by Sanghamitra Ghosh on Sunday.

Meena will oversee Tiruchirappalli (West) constituency, which was won by AIADMK in 2011 and in a subsequent bypoll, before DMK secured it in 2016 and 2021, according to an EC note.

These central observers include 557 general observers, 188 police observers and 366 expenditure observers.

While Bengal will have the highest number of general observers (294) — one for each assembly constituency — and 84 police observers, the highest number of expenditure observers (151) are headed for Tamil Nadu, given its history of circulation of unaccounted cash as poll inducement. The observers must reach their respective constituencies by Wednesday.

In Kerala, bureaucratic changes were made in Kozhikode, Thrissur, Alappuzha and Kannur districts. T Narayanan was posted as district police chief, Kozhikode; Thomson Jose as DIG range, Thrissur; Inbasekhar as district collector-cum-DEO, Alappuzha; Vandana S as returning officer, Irikkur; and Sachin Krishna as returning officer, Dharmadam.

At 478, EC appoints max observers for West Bengal

Kaushik.Pradhan
@timesofindia.com

Kolkata: The Election Commission has appointed the maximum number of observers for Bengal among the four poll-bound states and the Union Territory of Puducherry. The 478 observers — across general, police and expenditure categories — would be stationed in their respective assembly constituencies by Wednesday, an EC notification stated.

For the forthcoming two-phase Bengal assembly elections, the commission has deployed one general observer for each constituency. The number of police observers has also been significantly increased. Typically, one police observer is appointed per police district or commissionerate, but this time, the number has been more than doubled.

EC has also increased the number of expenditure observers tasked with monitoring election spending. The notification listed 294 general observers, 84 police observers, and 100 expenditure observers to be stationed across Bengal.

HACK OF THE DAY — ENCRYPT YOUR WHATSAPP BACKUP TOO

WHAT IT SOLVES: Protects your cloud backup so your chats and media are not just secure in transit but also protected when stored.

WHAT TO DO: Turn on end-to-end encrypted backup in WhatsApp instead of assuming normal cloud backup is equally private.

STEPS:

1. **Open** WhatsApp and go to Settings
2. **Tap** Chats, then Chat Backup
3. **Open** End-to-end encrypted backup
4. **Turn it on** and create a passkey, password, or 64-digit encryption key
5. **Store** that recovery method safely so you do not lose access later

CAREFUL: If you forget the password or lose the encryption key, recovery can become very difficult. Set it up only after deciding where you will store the recovery method.

SCAN FOR MORE

Hacks are based on verified public sources. Readers are advised to follow official websites & updated rules.

Patient shot in Agra hospital, cop held

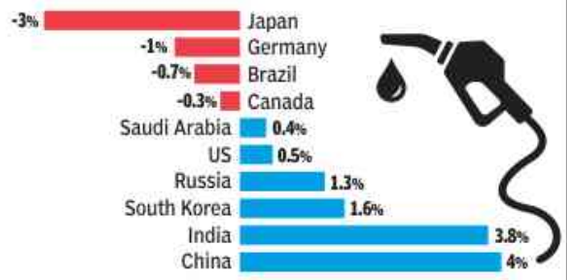
Two armed men, including a Pradeshik Armed Constabulary (PAC) jawan, barged into a private hospital in Aligarh and shot a 38-year-old patient point blank around 10pm on Monday and fled, **reports Mohammad Dilshad.** Vedpal Singh was shifted to a higher medical centre, where he died on Tuesday. An initial probe indicated the attack was linked to a five-year-long relationship. The woman's family had fixed her marriage to another man. Police said her father, Devendera Chaudhary, a UP police constable, was arrested. "Her cousin, Bhupendra Chaudhary, 28, a PAC jawan, and an associate fired at Vedpal," said a cop, adding efforts were under way to trace the two.

STATISTICS A slice of life in numbers

Who's cutting down on oil consumption and who's not

Over the past 10 years, many advanced economies have reduced their oil consumption — Japan by 3% annually and Germany by about 1%. High growth rate ecnomies like China and India recorded the sharpest growth among major consumers

Annual growth rate of oil consumption, largest consumers (2014-24)



Source: 2025 Energy Institute Statistical Review of World Energy

AIUDF's Ajmal back in Assam fray, eyes return after LS loss

Prabin.Kalita@timesofindia.com

All India United Democratic Front chief Badruddin Ajmal held Dhubri for 3 uninterrupted terms from 2009

Guwahati: Scent of a comeback. All India United Democratic Front chief **Badruddin Ajmal** has re-entered Assam's poll arena, seeking to reclaim ground lost after his 2024 LS defeat in Dhubri — a seat he held for three uninterrupted terms from 2009.

The 70-year-old businessman-neta, whose family-run fragrance house Ajmal Perfumes is a global brand, will contest from the newly carved Binnakandi constituency, marking his return to state-level politics. Ajmal said on Tuesday that his brother, sitting MLA Sirajuddin Ajmal, is unwell and will not seek re-election. "The party wants me to contest instead. I have decided accordingly," Ajmal added.

Choice of Binnakandi — formed out of Jamunamukh during the 2023 delimitation exercise — carries weight. Jamunamukh was launch pad for Ajmal's political debut in 2006, after he founded AIUDF the previous year.

His move comes as the party heads into polls solo while delimitation has redrawn the electoral map, trimming Muslim influence in about 10 constituencies.

Govt withdraws Jan Vishwas bill to amend some provisions

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi: Govt on Tuesday withdrew a proposed legislation — Jan Vishwas (Amendment of Provisions) Bill, 2025 — from the Lok Sabha seeking to amend certain enactments for decriminalising and rationalising offences to further enhance trust-based governance.

Union commerce minister Piyush Goyal moved the bill for withdrawal, which was approved by the House with a voice vote. The withdrawal of the bill was moved as reported by a select committee.

The bill is expected to be reintroduced after incorporating recommendations of the select committee.

A pending bill can be withdrawn after seeking permission of the House.

Cong's lst list of 55 out, Ramesh Pisharody to contest in Palakkad

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

T'puram: Congress announced on Tuesday its first list for the April 9 Kerala assembly election — candidates for 55 of the 92 seats it will be contesting.

Leader of opposition in the assembly V D Satheesan will seek a mandate from North Paravur, while senior politician Ramesh Chennithala will contest from Haripad. KPCC president Sunny Joseph has entered the fray in Peravoor, Kannur.

Candidates have not been declared for Konni, Alappuzha and Kannur, significant because there is speculation that MPs Adoor Prakash, K C Venugopal and K Sudhakaran might contest from these seats.

But there are also reports that the party high command feels they are not in favour of the MPs contesting the assembly elections.

No MP has been named in the first list.

All sitting MLAs, other than K Babu, Rahul Mamkootathil and Eldose Kunnappally, have been fielded again. MLAs Thiruvanchoor Radhakrishnan (Kottayam), Anwar Sadath (Aluva) and Roji M John (Angamaly) will thus seek a mandate again. In Palakkad, Ramesh Pisharody has come in place of Mamkootathil, who was suspended from the party following sexual assault charges.

BATTLEGROUND KERALA

Youth Congress state president O J Janeesh has been fielded in Kodungallur. However, candidates have not been announced where there are severe differences between politicians about picking the final names, including Thiruvananthapuram and Pathanamthitta.

In Thiruvananthapuram, where intense lobbying for seats is on, only three candidates have been named — K Muraleedharan in Vattiyoorkavu, sitting MLA M Vincent in Kovalam, and Remya Haridas in Chirayinkeezhu. Former Alathur MP Haridas has been fielded amid strong protest from local party politicians.

In Pathanamthitta, no candidate has as yet been finalised.

Those who have joined Congress from CPM — A Suresh in Malampuzha and Aisha Potty in Kottarakkara — have also been given seats. Elsewhere, C K Janu, who asked for Mananthavadi seat, has not been given a ticket this time, with Usha Vijayan being fielded there.

Share of young men in education falls

▶ Continued from page 1

Besides, the report noted that while young graduates continue to have more monthly earnings compared to the non-graduates in entry level jobs, this premium is narrowing over time. The gap between graduate and non-graduate earnings for youth increased substantially, especially between 2004 and 2011. Since 2017, however, there has been a slowdown in earnings growth for young men.

Data shows that in 2011, young graduate men earned around Rs 21,800 a month, while a non-graduate earned Rs 9,000. This declined to Rs 19,769 in 2017 and Rs 19,573 in 2023 for graduates, while it rose to Rs 10,480 and Rs 10,507 for non-graduates.

DEGREE OF JOBLESSNESS

Year	Graduates		Unemployed Graduates	
	As Share Of 20-29-Year-Olds	No. (In Lakh)	As % Of 20-29-Yr-Olds Unemployed	No. (In Lakh)
1983	4%	50	13%	7
1993	6%	90	22%	20
2004	10%	190	32%	30
2011	16%	320	44%	40
2017	22%	490	46%	100
2023	28%	630	67%	110

Sources and notes: NSS, EUS and PLFS, various years

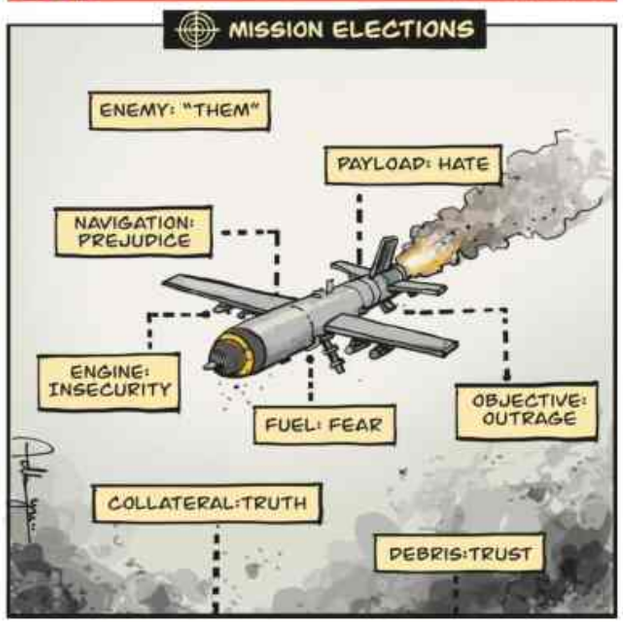
The report also said that since 2017, the share of young men in education has fallen to 34% in 2024 from 38% in 2017, citing the need to support household incomes.

In terms of access to higher education for the youth, the report added that financial barriers continue to restrict access, particularly in professional fields such as engineering and medicine, as the cost of pursuing these degrees often exceeds the annual per capita expenditure for poorer households. "This gap has narrowed somewhat between 2007 and 2017, although disparities remain," it said.

The report drew on official databases going back four decades to see how youth's participation in education and employment has changed.

It said in the post-Covid period, India's employed population has increased from 490 million to 572 million, with employment rates rising from 71% to 74% for men and from 26 to 34% for women, between 2021-22 and 2023-24.

TOI LINE OF NO CONTROL SANDEEP ADHWARYU



BJP lashes out at Congress for 'endorsing' USCIRF report

New Delhi: BJP on Tuesday hit out at Congress for "endorsing" the USCIRF report recommending sanctions on RSS and RAW and said in their antagonism to govt and PM Narendra Modi, the opposition party and Rahul Gandhi are standing against India.

BJP dismissed the report as 'baseless' and said it is based on non-credible sources, as it cited the response of MEA, which has rejected the report.

BJP spokesperson **Sambit Patra** said RAW, India's external spy agency, should not be subject of commentary or calls for sanctions by any foreign commission. "While govt has responded strongly, Congress is speaking against RAW and standing with this commission," Patra added.

Noting that the official handle of the opposition party had endorsed the report, he said it shows the extent to which the party can go against the country "at the instance of Rahul".

Patra said a Pakistani-American, Asif Mohammed, serves as vice-chair and commissioner in USCIRF, alleging that his influence was behind the report's criticism of India.

"Whenever Rahul travels abroad, he associates with such individuals and leaves no opportunity to tarnish India's image or harm the country's reputation," he alleged. TNN

11 MLAs defy diktat, reveal Cong weakness in NDA states

RS Polls Show How Factionalism & 'Money Power' Have Hit Party

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi: Eleven Congress MLAs defied the party diktat in RS elections, once again highlighting how Upper House polls — both at the Centre and in states — have emerged as the party's Achilles' heel when it is in the opposition.

While 5 Congress MLAs voted against the party in Haryana, 3 defied it in Odisha, and 3 in Bihar abstained. Four votes declared invalid in Haryana have been dubbed by Congress as the handiwork of BJP through its "agent returning officer".

The repeated defections in RS and legislative council elections in states where Congress is in the opposition have been a result of either the "influence" of the governing parties led by BJP or factionalism. Congress managed to win the RS election in Haryana after losing two in the past, while its bid to help allies in Bihar and Odisha came a cropper.

Many believe it is a result of the inability of Congress to eject BJP from states, which has resulted in despondency among elected members and has made them easy prey for the governing party. The defiance in

'REPEATED DEFECTIONS IN RS'

Odisha and Bihar is attributed to this reality. However, the factionalism bit seems to have played a role in Haryana, where the cross-voting MLAs in the past went on to join BJP, like Kiran Choudhary and Kuldeep Bishnoi.

Many insiders and state in-charges have expressed helplessness that "money power" is the "carrot" factor that cannot be easily neutralised given that it also comes with the "stick" of the threats from the governing party. They said it makes legislators with business interests particularly vulnerable.

However, strong leadership and state unit are being credited with the party's success in winning in Haryana RS, despite what the party called "the returning officer working as a BJP agent".

BJP used money, threats and 'partisan' returning officer in Haryana: Cong

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi: Congress Tuesday said the governing BJP employed "money power, threats and misuse of returning officer" to win the Haryana Rajya Sabha election at any cost, as it slammed the rival for again "exposing its anti-Ambedkar character" by trying to steal the parliament membership of grassroots Dalit activist Karamvir Boudh.

After scraping a victory in the Haryana Rajya Sabha polls, despite cross voting by five Congress MLAs and four of its votes declared invalid, Congress MP **Deepender Hooda** said BJP had appointed Gujarat deputy CM as the observer for the polls which showed that the BJP leadership wanted to win the election irrespective of the tactic used.

"BJP tried to murder democracy in the dark of night. All the four votes declared as invalid were completely valid. They had even been put in the tray of valid votes by an official. But this was done by a blatantly partisan RO (returning officer) to contrive the numbers in favour of BJP," he told a press conference with Congress's scheduled castes department chairman Rajendra Pal Gautam.

Deepender said Congress will take strong action against the MLAs who cross voted and betrayed the party, adding that people will not forgive the legislators who betrayed their mandate.

He said BJP wanted to engineer cross-voting by nine or seven Congress legislators while securing two votes of INLD. He said INLD, "which is the B-team of BJP", declared its decision to abstain from polling barely half an hour before the voting ended, because it was sure that Congress was winning the election.

Deepender said when BJP's "game of pressure and money" failed, BJP employed its third strategy of fixing the play through RO. "RO worked as a BJP agent," he added.

Rajya Sabha poll loss exposes rift within Bihar's Grand Alliance

Patna: Simmering infighting within Bihar's opposition Grand Alliance came to the fore Tuesday, a day after the bloc failed to win any of the five seats in Rajya Sabha polls. Congress MLAs blamed ally RJD for fielding what they described as a "wrong candidate", leading to the debacle, report **Madan Kumar** and **Abhay Singh**.

Surendra Prasad Kushwaha, one of the three Congress MLAs who stayed away from voting on Monday, said he did so as RJD had made a poor choice in selecting its nominee, Amrendra Dhari Singh.

Kushwaha questioned why Deepak Yadav, MD of a sugar mill, or Mukesh Sahani, chief of Vikassheel Insaan Party, was not chosen instead. "I can not support NDA, and since RJD chose the wrong candidate, I thought it better not to vote at all," Kushwaha posted.

Manoj Vishwas, another Congress legislator who skipped voting, claimed RJD had fielded Amrendra, a Bhumihar, without consulting state Congress netas. Independent MP Pappu Yadav accused RJD's Tejashwi Yadav of failing to build a consensus.

Bihar Congress witnessed renewed dissent as party netas and expelled rebels raised concerns over alleged irregularities in the RS polls. State Congress chief Rajesh Ram protested outside the party's office, accusing BJP of indulging in "vote theft" and "MLA theft".

Cong suspends 3 Odisha legislators for cross-voting

Ashok.Pradhan
@timesofindia.com

(Clockwise from top left) MLAs Dasarathi Gomango, Sofia Firdous and Ramesh Jena

Bhubaneswar: Congress suspended on Tuesday three of its Odisha MLAs and moved to initiate disqualification proceedings against them for cross-voting alongside eight BJD legislators to defeat Datteswar Hota, an Independent candidate backed by both parties in Monday's Rajya Sabha election.

"Sofia Firdous, Ramesh Jena and Dasarathi Gomango have been suspended for violating the party whip and voting for the BJP-backed candidate," Odisha PCC's disciplinary committee chairperson, Sujit Padhi, said.

CLP's Rama Chandra Kadam wrote to speaker Surama Padhy soon after the trio's suspension, seeking their disqualification from the assembly. "Their conduct has not only undermined party discipline but also goes against the democratic mandate under which they were elected," he wrote.

In a separate letter, Kadam urged the speaker to change seating arrangements in the House so that Firdous, Jena and Gomango aren't next to their colleagues.

Naveen Patnaik's BJD, too, slammed the eight party MLAs who cross-voted for allegedly succumbing to the "lure of money" and "betraying" the party and the people who elected them. "BJD has zero tolerance for indiscipline," party spokesperson Lenin Mohanty said.

At a presser at the BJD office in Bhubaneswar, MLAs Pramila Mallik, Byomkesh Ray and Dhruba Charan Sahoo accused their eight colleagues of voting for BJP-backed Independent candidate, Dilip Ray, "in exchange for large sums of money". Sahoo claimed Rengali MLA, Sudarshan Haripal, who was also approached, rejected an offer of Rs 15 crore.

Among BJD MLAs who cross-voted, Devi Ranjan Tripathy and Souvic Biswal said they were protecting "Biju Patnaik's legacy". Tripathy argued Ray was a close associate of Patnaik, while Biswal said the party insulted his father and ex-MLA Pravat Biswal by expelling him.

BJP nearly won 2nd Hry seat, Cong hung on by a thread

Manvir.Saini@timesofindia.com

Chandigarh: The fight for the second Rajya Sabha seat in Haryana went down to the wire in Monday's election, and BJP was very nearly handed a surprise victory as five Congress lawmakers cross-voted and four of its votes were declared invalid. The opposition party clung on and scraped through by the narrowest of margins.

BJP's Sanjay Bhatia, a former Lok Sabha MP, and Congress' Karamveer Boudh won, but the scoreline didn't reflect the drama and suspense that dragged on into the early hours of Tuesday.

The cross-voting and invalidation of votes came as an embarrassment for Congress, which had bundled off 32 MLAs to Himachal three days ahead of the election, ostensibly to shield them from poaching attempts and to train them to vote.

On paper, both BJP (48 MLAs) and Congress (37 MLAs) looked set to win one seat each. With INLD abstaining, each RS candidate needed 30 first-preference votes to win. But the entry of BJP-backed Independent, Satish Nandal, skewed the equation

Haryana CM Nayab Singh Saini congratulates Sanjay Bhatia on being elected as a Rajya Sabha MP

cluding three Independents, but the gap still seemed impossible to bridge for Nandal. On paper, that is.

Polling started at 9am on Monday and went on till around 5pm. Both sides complained to EC — while BJP alleged "violation of vote secrecy", Congress filed a complaint against Haryana minister Anil Vij's vote.

AICC chief Mallikarjun Kharge wrote to EC urging it to stop the attempt to "interfere with the integrity of RS polls". "No disqualification of our legitimate votes can be allowed in what is clearly a transparent attempt to taint/derail the process," his letter said. With part of the drama shifting to Delhi, it wasn't until 10.30pm that counting started. On Tuesday, the returning officer declared Bhatia and Boudh winners. With Congress losing 9 votes, BJP-backed Nandal was a hair's breadth from turning the tables.

While Bhatia sailed through, Boudh polled 28 votes, while Nandal got 16. But the fight was closer than it looked. As per the formula devised for RS polls, Boudh's proportionate vote share was 28, while Nandal got 25, too close for comfort. Five votes were declared invalid — four of Congress and one of BJP.

"Our votes were illegally cancelled, but it was the blessings of Congress, the high command and leaders here that helped me win," said Boudh. Bhatia attributed his win to his party high command and local MLAs.

Over 200 retd officials demand Rahul apology over Parl protest

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi: Over 200 retired armed forces officers, former civil servants, diplomats and lawyers Tuesday accused leader of opposition in Lok Sabha **Rahul Gandhi** of violating parliamentary decorum during the opposition's protest and demanded his apology.

"Rahul Gandhi, along with several MPs, was seen sitting on the steps of Parliament having tea and biscuits in a manner that was wholly unbecoming of members of the nation's highest legislative body. The steps of Parliament are not a venue for spectacle or political theatre," they said in an open letter endorsed by 204 signatories.

They alleged that Rahul's action within the Parliament complex amounted to a deliberate defiance of the chair and showed disregard for parliamentary authority.

"It shows an attitude of arrogance and entitlement," they added.

They said Speaker Om Birla had issued an explicit instruction against demonstrations or protests within Parliament premises but the opposition, led by Rahul, disregarded the directive.

"Rahul must apologise to the nation for this behaviour and introspect the attitude that produced it, so that the solemnity, authority and institutional sanctity of the Parliament remain preserved," they said.

Nurturing Her Health

SPOTLIGHT

Educating for a dignified tomorrow

Menstrual Hygiene Awareness Workshops conducted across government schools in Bengaluru brought together healthcare professionals and community partners. The initiative was organised by Circana India Private Limited, in association with The Times of India, and supported by the Society for Action in Community Health

Devanshi.Shah
@timesofindia.com

Menstrual hygiene awareness plays a vital role in supporting the health, confidence and well-being of adolescent girls. With growing access to accurate information and health education, young girls today are increasingly empowered to understand menstruation as a natural biological process and manage it with comfort and dignity. Awareness around hygienic practices, the use of safe menstrual products and the importance of personal cleanliness is helping create healthier habits and greater self-confidence.

Against this backdrop, Menstrual Hygiene Awareness Workshops across five government schools in Bangalore were organised. This activity was done as CSR Activity of Circana India Private Limited, NGO partner SACH - Society in Action for Community Health & The Times of India as an execution partner. The initiative reached more than 430 adolescent girls through a series of informative and interactive sessions.

The sessions focused on equipping students with accurate knowledge about menstrual health and encouraging open conversations around a topic that often remains surrounded by stigma. Doctors from Motherhood Hospital led the workshops, guiding students through essential aspects of menstrual hygiene and health management.

Among the medical professionals who conducted the sessions were Dr Deepmala, Dr Thejaswini, Dr Priyanka Dass, Dr Kavya Shree, Dr Prathima and Dr Vimala Dhari. Through structured presentations and interactive discussions, they addressed key topics such as the biological aspects of menstruation, safe and hygienic menstrual practices, and the importance of maintaining personal hygiene during menstrual cycles.

A key component of the workshops was addressing myths and misconceptions associated with menstruation. The doctors emphasised the importance of scientific understanding and encouraged students to view menstruation as a natural biological process rather than a subject of discomfort or secrecy.

The sessions were designed to be highly interactive, allowing students to ask questions freely and discuss concerns that they might otherwise hesitate to express. This approach helped create a comfortable environment where participants could openly engage with medical professionals and gain clarity on various aspects of menstrual health.

Educators and organisers noted that such awareness initiatives are essential in empowering young girls with the knowledge needed to manage their health confidently. By addressing misinformation at an early age, programmes like these contribute to building informed and confident communities.

"Creating awareness around menstrual health is an important step towards ensuring that young girls feel informed, confident and supported during adolescence. Initiatives like these help encourage open conversations and contribute to building a healthier and more informed future generation," said Vishwanath Sastry, head of Circana India Private Limited.

In addition to the awareness sessions, sanitary pads were distributed to the students, ensuring that the educational component was complemented with practical support. The distribution aimed to reinforce the importance of hygienic menstrual practices and ensure that students have access to basic menstrual hygiene products. With growing emphasis on menstrual health awareness across educational institutions, initiatives like this continue to play an important role in normalising conversations around menstruation and supporting adolescent well-being.

WHICH ONE IS HEALTHIER?

Shahi Tukra	1 serving	Tiramisu
380-420	CALORIES	320-350
40-45g	CARBS	30-35g
25-30g	SUGAR	18-22g
18-22g	FAT	20-24g
7-9g	PROTEIN	6-7g

Shahi tukra is deep fried bread soaked in sugar syrup, with rabri (reduced milk) on top. Tiramisu is ladyfingers (a kind of biscuit) soaked in coffee, and layered with a whipped mix of mascarpone cheese, cream, egg yolks and sugar, cocoa powder dusted on top. Dairy in shahi tukra gives protein and calcium, and desi ghee adds to butyrate that supports colon health. But deep-fried bread leads to harmful Advanced Glycation End products (AGEs) that can cause oxidative stress. Heavy on digestion, it can aggravate bloating, reflux and gut inflammation. Tiramisu has coffee polyphenols that may support microbial diversity. And fermented dairy (mascarpone) may be slightly easier to digest than rabri. Tiramisu is a better choice if eaten occasionally with portion control.

Source: **Ishi Khosla**, clinical nutritionist and author, 4G Code to Good Health

LATEST IN HEALTH RESEARCH

Can daily multivitamin slow down ageing in our cells?

A daily dose of multivitamins can slow down cellular ageing and reduce biological age by around four months, Massachusetts General Brigham researchers have found. According to Daily Mail, the study published in Nature Medicine did a trial to look at biological ages of 1,000-odd people in their 70s and track methylation, or age-related DNA changes, over two years. Those who took daily multivitamins showed slower ageing in all five DNA-based ageing measures, the effect strongest for ones whose biological age was more than their actual one. "This opens the door to learning more about safe and accessible interventions that help in healthier, higher-quality ageing, study author Howard Sesso told Daily Mail.

Mistakes, negligence, pressure: Why routine surgeries go wrong

In India, the possibility of a complication on the surgical table is higher than the global average, opening an added dimension of risk

Pushpa Narayan, Lata Mishra & Anuja Jaiswal | TNN

A 34-year-old woman from Jaipur woke up paralysed from waist down after receiving a spinal anaesthesia for her Caesarean section, a routine step for millions of births every year. An MRI showed a rare spinal bleed squeezing her lower spinal cord and nerves. A team led by neurosurgeons at Mahatma Gandhi University of Medical Sciences and Technology operated on her to remove the spinal clot. One of the neurosurgeons, Dr Anmol Singh Randhawa, later wrote about her ordeal in a 2025 paper published in Surgical Neurology International. It took three months for the new mother to regain leg strength, bladder and bowel control, and dodge life-long wheelchair use.

She was lucky. Others have had to live with chronic infection or disability after routine surgeries went horribly wrong. "When diagnosis is delayed or complications are not nipped in the bud, a manageable surgical condition can quickly become a life threat," says Dr Prashant Kumar, general and laparoscopic surgeon at PSRI Hospital, Delhi. "Failing to seek specialist support while there's still time can amount to serious medical negligence."

Images: AI

COMMON SURGICAL ERRORS

Foreign objects: Cotton, forceps, or surgical scissors mistakenly left in body can cause severe pain and need another surgery for removal

Contaminated instruments: Unsterilised tools can cause surgical site infections, a leading cause of post-operative problems in India

Anaesthesia issues: Wrong anaesthesia dose can trigger several issues. Not monitoring vitals while giving spinal dose can even cause paralysis

Wrong surgery: Operating upon wrong limb or site, or removing wrong organ can cause life-threatening complications

FOR SAFER PROCEDURES...

■ **Communicate clearly:** Patient history should be at fingertips of surgical team to leave no scope for error. Patient needs to give doctor full disclosure on known medical conditions, allergies, medicines taken etc. Doctors also need to inform patients about risks, alternative treatments prior to surgery

■ **Follow strict protocol:** All hospitals (govt and private) need to follow the WHO Surgical Safety Checklist (which confirms patient identity, site of surgery, and equipment used), and maintain full sterility in OT

■ **Don't wait till last stage:** The earlier you visit the doctor for routine surgeries such as gall stone removal and appendix operations, the lesser the chances of complications post surgery

More risks post surgery here

There are no standalone national statistics on post-operative complications or deaths, but multiple small studies highlight elevated risks in India compared to global standards, many acknowledged by medical bodies, including Indian Medical Association and Association of Surgeons of India.

Researchers tracked 207 adults at Tata Memorial Hospital in Mumbai, NIMHANS in Bengaluru, and CIMS in Ahmedabad for the International Surgical Outcomes Study. Results published in the 2021 edition of Indian Journal of Critical Care Medicine showed complications struck 57 patients (27.5%) compared to 19.8% globally. Common complications were infections, heart issues, and kidney failure. One in three patients is likely to develop issues after elective surgery, and one in 11 likely to die if they do, the study authors warned — worse than the global one-in-six complications and one-in-35 deaths.

The Association of Surgeons of India had already acknowledged these gaps in its 2019 call for rigorous protocols and checklists. Yet, little appears to have changed. Doctors point to myriad causes, from lapses in infection control to outright negligence. "A step forward would be to follow international benchmarks," says senior orthopaedician Dr George Thomas, ex-editor of Indian Journal of Medical Ethics. "But that may not be easy as it will push up costs."

Long suffering after a shortcut

A woman from Mumbai in her late 60s continues to live with the consequences of an infection she contracted during a hysterectomy nearly 20 years ago. The surgery, performed at Bombay Hospital in 2007 to treat heavy bleeding caused by fibroids, was preceded by multiple tests that showed no signs of infection. But within weeks of returning home, she began experiencing fatigue, itching, joint pain and yellowing of the eyes. Tests later confirmed Hepatitis C, a virus that attacks the liver and can lead to chronic disease. "She used to be so active and independent. But everything changed after the surgery. She has had to live with constant health monitoring and precautions for years," recalls her son. Now, she tires easily, undergoes regular blood tests, and is cautious even with personal items such as razors or nail clippers. Her ongoing medical expenses have become a steady financial burden for her family.

Her advocate Siddharth Chandrashekhar says that in 2019, the South Mumbai District Consumer Disputes Redress Forum observed that the possibility of infection being transmitted through unsterilised instruments or needles used during surgery could not be ruled out, directing the hospital and doctors to pay Rs 6 lakh in compensation for medical negligence.

> International Surgical Outcomes Study tracked Mumbai's Tata Memorial Hospital, NIMHANS in Bengaluru, and CIMS in Ahmedabad to find that surgical complications struck around 28% of Indian patients compared to around 20% globally

Doctors and hospital staff are known to reuse equipment and forgo essential protocols to cut costs. That explains deaths after routine biopsies and hair transplants. "Medical negligence in surgery usually arises when basic safety protocols are ignored," explains Dr Utkarsh Srivastava, a plastic surgeon. "Errors like wrong-site surgery, retained instruments or failure to follow sterilisation standards represent serious lapses in accepted surgical care."

Infections lurk everywhere, from unwashed hands to contaminated gear. At Vaniyambadi in Tamil Nadu, eight people died from neuromelioidosis — a rare bacterial brain infection — after routine dental cleanings and extractions. A Christian Medical College Vellore investigation, published in The Lancet in 2025, traced the outbreak to saline opened with an unsterile instrument.

Errors that prove costly

Carelessness by surgical teams can also turn fatal for a patient. Doctors at a govt hospital in Chennai forgot to remove the tourniquet for 17-year-old footballer A Priya's knee ligament surgery, starving her leg of blood and leading to amputation, sepsis and eventually, death. Usha Joseph Kutty (51) from Kerala's Alappuzha district discovered an artery forceps left inside her abdomen nearly five years after a hysterectomy at Govt Medical College Hospital.

Alok Kumar, who teaches at Sri Ram College of Commerce, Delhi, says his son suffered permanent brain damage after the doctor handling his wife's pregnancy back in 2018 miscalculated the due date by nearly a month. On the doctor's advice, his wife was admitted at a private hospital and labour was induced with oxytocin, which continued for nearly 16 hours. Kumar alleges that despite severe labour pain around 1am, the doctor did not respond to repeated requests. The amniotic fluid gradually leaked out and in the morning, the baby got stuck during delivery. Doctors rushed for an emergency procedure after obtaining his signature at the OT door, but by then the child had suffered severe oxygen deprivation and was left in a vegetative state.

Kumar filed complaints with Delhi Medical Council, which found negligence against one doctor and temporarily suspended the licence, but the others were cleared. An independent opinion from AIIMS Delhi later pointed to errors in pregnancy date calculation and ignoring of ultrasound findings. The child survived for nearly six years on feeding tubes and oxygen support at home before passing away in 2023, says Kumar.

Many docs are overworked

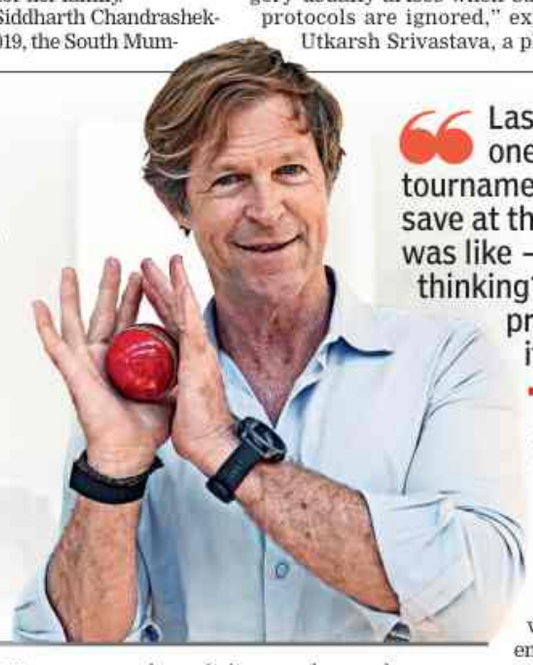
However, in a perennially short-staffed medical system, some doctors feel they are under too much pressure to deliver. "Sometimes, expectations from us are unrealistic. Doctors in most govt hospitals are overworked and the infrastructure is not strong enough to support growing patient needs," says Tamil Nadu Govt Doctors Association president Dr K Senthil.

Besides, the growing incidence of diabetes, hypertension, obesity and heart diseases complicates even regular medical procedures. "It is assumed that surgeries described as 'minor' are entirely risk-free," points out Dr Jalil D Parkar, a senior chest medicine specialist at Mumbai's Lilavati Hospital. "Even seemingly simple interventions may involve anaesthesia, medications and physiological stress on the body. Undiagnosed conditions such as heart disease, severe allergies, and lung disorders can surface unexpectedly during or after surgery in such cases."

Dr Arun Bhardwaj, laparoscopic and bariatric surgeon at Aakash Healthcare, says negligence is not just about a mistake during surgery but also about not following before-and-after protocols. "Proper preparation, team coordination and timely response to complications are essential to prevent avoidable harm." As India's high-risk patients crowd operating tables, tended by teams of varying skill, demands grow for mandatory nationwide standard operating procedures. The errors remain rare. But one slip can scar forever.

'Bollywood template of big biceps & 6-pack isn't fitness, living healthy is'

*Jonty Rhodes, who terrorised Indian cricket fans with his electric fielding, is now half-Indian, with a house in Goa and a daughter named 'India'. Still supremely agile at 56, he walks **TOI Health+** through his fitness mantras*



> Last year, I played in one of those legends tournaments. I did a diving save at the boundary. My wife was like — 'what were you thinking?' Flying is not the problem these days, it's the landing!

Pankaj.Upadhyaya@timesofindia.com

■ **You said in one of your interviews: 'I can teach a cricketer to catch a ball, but I can't teach him how to get to the ball to catch it'? You are 56 and still look like you could get to any ball that is up in the air...**
Last year, I played in one of those legends tournaments and I did a diving save at the boundary. My wife was like — 'what were you thinking?' Flying is not the problem these days, it's the landing!

> My fitness is functional. At my age, a lot of it is about mobility. Three things that we focus on as a family to keep fit — sleep, nutrition and movement

■ **If you were to describe your own fitness, how would you describe it?**
I think fitness is such a multi-meaning word. For me, it's about wellness. I can't run a marathon, but I surf, I cycle, and I love to walk. When I'm back in Cape Town, we go into the mountains. In Goa, we live in a tiny fishing village because that allows the kids to be in the ocean all the time. My fitness is functional. At my age, a lot of it is about mobility. Three things that we focus on as a family to keep fit — sleep, nutrition and movement. Food is important, obviously, because if you're not fuelling yourself, if you're eating a lot of processed food, you're not helping yourself no matter how hard you're training. And then sleep — it's the cornerstone. We have no TV in Goa and no TV in Cape Town. Evenings are spent reading. We wind down around 8-8.30pm and by 9 pm, the whole family is fast asleep. I am the best sleeper in our family.

■ **Tell us about your diet...**
There is no diet plan. If you are following a diet, then a cheat day is required and that knocks you back. Our kids can eat anything in the house. But when we purchase things, we do it with a clear intent. And the intent is to consume clean, natural, fresh food. We don't have any sugar in our house. We use honey if we need a sweetener.

■ **What about exercise?**
Again, no training regime. Movement for us is exercise. I'm no longer running. When I retired, I said, that's it. I've been a hockey player, a cricket player. No more running. I have a mountain bike and a surfboard. Surfing is a real workout for me. Surfing builds upper body strength because it involves heavy paddling in the ocean. With the mountain bike, I get my endurance, my cardio. It is always 2-3 hours in the hills. My wife does yoga every day. She is a yoga teacher.

■ **What are the three habits you believe make the biggest difference for long-term health after 50?**
Managing stress is obviously massive. People work really, really hard in India. It's 5.10 pm and they (referring to the TOI building's 4th floor in Mumbai, where this conversation happened) look like they're just checking in. In South Africa, we're already on the road, going home. I think being out in nature is important. Movement in the outdoors is such an important part of relieving stress. The second important thing after 50 is mobility with strength work. I use a resistance band as I can take it with me when I am travelling.

■ **Stress must have been a real thing when you were an active sportsman...**
We must understand there is good stress and bad stress. That's a great thing working with longevity experts like Dr Marcus Ranney (author of the book, 'Good Stress Bad Stress — Powerful Tools to Help You Thrive Under Pressure') It's always been the two sides of adrenaline for me — it can induce fear, but if you embrace it, it can make you sharper. I used stress to prepare better. The night before (a big game), meditation played a big part.

■ **There is concern in India about very young men, apparently fit, dying suddenly — on cricket fields, on badminton courts, at weddings. Are you aware of these incidents and what is your reading?**
A big issue for me in India is the Bollywood fitness template — big biceps and six-pack. You need to understand what's going on in your system. And that's where the important question comes in — how are we living our lives? You need to lead a healthy life to be fit.

> Longevity is not about living to be 100. If I die at 80, but I'm running around chasing my kids, that's longevity — making sure my years on this planet are healthy ones

■ **Did you take supplements when you were a sportsman? Do you support protein supplements?**
I didn't take any supplements as a sportsman but during my playing days, we had only three options for drinks on the field — water, Coca-Cola and Coke with water. That was it. This was way before energy drinks and sports drinks came in. In a perfect world, you should be able get everything from your diet, but we know you're never going to. So, we take magnesium for sleep. I have taken supplements and I'm not against them. Creatine is something I haven't yet taken, but I'm investigating it.

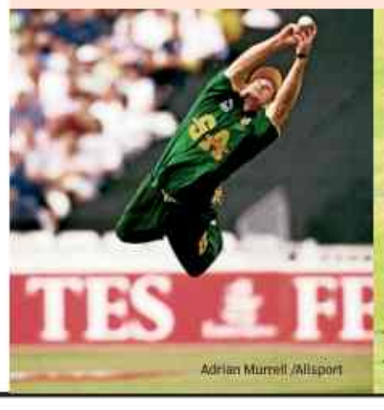
■ **Is over-exercising a problem?**
I don't think so, but understanding your body is important. At my age, if I bust myself in the gym, I will feel it very, very quickly. I can put in maximum effort, but it'll take me two, three days to recover. Recovery is a big part of my focus now as opposed to just doing the training.

■ **How much is fitness about engaging with life, being happy and being functional vs working towards longevity?**
Longevity is not about living to be 100. If I die at 80, but I'm running around chasing my kids, then that is longevity for me. It's about making sure that the years on this planet are good, healthy ones. Because I have a blended family — I've got kids and soon will have grandkids too (from my first marriage) — I'm not biohacking to be 150. I'm just ensuring, through lifestyle, that as long as I'm on this planet, it's a healthy journey.

■ **One image of you that will always stick is of you riding an Enfield in sweltry Mumbai....**
As international sportsmen, you're told — seize the day, carpe diem. And that's always my story. In India, often the case is that when you're trying to seize the day, there's a door that's closed and you're trying to bash it down. But there is also a door that could open another path. But because you haven't given yourself the opportunity to embrace other scenarios, you miss the path that you should be on. So, this is more about me embracing life around me.

MY HEALTH, MY LIFE

RHODES REWIND: THE CRICKETER WHO DEFIED GRAVITY



Adrian Murrell /Allsport

Touchline Photo/Getty Images

Mar 22, 2002: Rhodes in action in an ODI between South Africa and Australia at Johannesburg. Rhodes played 245 ODIs and 52 Tests for the Proteas in an international career from 1992-2003

Aug 18, 1998: Jonty Rhodes takes a flying catch during a match against England at Birmingham, which South Africa won by 14 runs

KNOW YOUR VITAL STATS

Too much phone time may be giving children brain rot

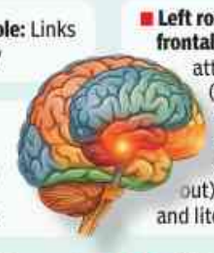
Short form videos are snack content that kids are feeding on day and night. And just like unhealthy snacks spoil the growing body, a new study has found that scrolling through mindless reels robs children of crucial cognitive abilities

What does the study say?
Japanese researchers studied data on screen time and brain structure of more than **7,000 kids** in a US Adolescent Brain Cognitive Development study. The found more screen use linked to enhanced ADHD symptoms and reduced cortical thickness in brain areas such as:

■ **Right temporal pole:** Links emotion to memory

■ **Left rostral middle frontal gyrus:** Involved in attentional control (ability to focus, filter distractions, switch between tasks, plan things out), managing stress, and literacy

■ **Left superior frontal gyrus:** Controls cognition, working memory and motor function



White matter lost to screens
Less sleep in adolescents reduces white matter, the brain's main wiring system that's key for motor and sensory function, learning and memory, as well as cohesive thought. A 2025 study in JAMA Internal Medicine found teens who used screens the most were impulsive, and exhibited lower vocabulary and comprehension skills

> We need brain's cortex to control addictive behaviour and not get too impulsive. Those seem to be areas affected by reduced cortical thickness. Impulsivity can prompt us to seek dopamine hits from social media
>
> **Mitch Prinstein,** PROFESSOR OF PSYCHOLOGY AND NEUROSCIENCE, UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA AT CHAPEL HILL

How to stop that brain rot? A tip... don't ask AI

Don't bring screens to bedroom

Don't outsource homework to AI, let kids use their brains instead

Regulate screen time, delete problematic apps, use app blockers

Don't use technology for everything. A little struggle is good for the brain

Source: The Washington Post

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Appraisal Season: What Influences Promotion Decisions

By Roopa Kudva

Every year around appraisal season, conference rooms across organisations fill with spreadsheets, rating grids, and compensation bands. Names are discussed, scores are compared, arguments are made. Promotion decisions are rarely as straightforward as they appear. The process is more human, and more imperfect, than most people imagine.

Performance matters, but it is only one variable among several. Budgets constrain choices. Role availability limits options. Team balance, succession plans, and business cycles all influence outcomes. Two strong candidates may be competing for one opening. A business unit may have limited headcount expansion despite strong results. A leader may be weighing immediate delivery needs against long-term leadership depth. In such situations, a capable professional may be asked to wait not because they lack ability, but because the organisation has limited room to move.

This leads to an uncomfortable but important truth: a promotion decision is often shaped as much by organisational context as by individual merit. That does not mean the system is always fair or free of bias. Human judgment is imperfect, and organisational politics are real. But it does mean that outcomes are frequently influenced by structural constraints and timing, not solely by personal capability.

A moment in a long career

Promotion meetings assess readiness for a specific role at a specific moment within a particular organisational context. They measure performance against defined expectations. They do not measure character, resilience, judgment under pressure or the capacity to grow — the qualities that actually determine where a career eventually ends up.

Ambition is important. Titles, compensation, and expanded responsibility matter because they reflect trust and open doors. But careers span four decades or more. Over that time there will be periods of acceleration and periods of pause, roles that stretch and roles that stabilise. An appraisal cycle captures only a small fragment of that arc.

After the decision

Promotion season will pass. Ratings will be finalised. Some professionals will celebrate; others will recalibrate plans. If you were promoted, decide what you will build with it. If not, assess what you need to change or whether the organisation constraints are temporary.

Organisations decide promotions. The meaning you attach to that decision is yours.

(Roopa Kudva led Crisil and ONI)

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SC judge: Was reference to 7-J bench, then to 9-J bench valid?

Apex Court To Test Correctness Of Expansive Definition Of 'Industry'

Dhananjay.Mahapatra
@timesofindia.com

On appeal, SC in 1978, defined 'industry' expansively. Such was the sweep of its ambit that almost everything came to be defined as industry and those working there got covered as workmen under Industrial Disputes Act

New Delhi: Justice Dipankar Datta, part of the CJI Surya Kant-led nine-judge bench testing the correctness of the expansive definition of 'industry' that the court settled on in 1978, on Tuesday questioned the correctness of the process through which a five-judge bench referred the matter to a larger bench in 2005.

Justice Datta said, "There is no deliberation in the 2005 judgment as to what compelling circumstances warranted reference to a larger bench. Moreover, was it correct on the part of the five-judge bench to delineate the ratio, that is how many judges in the 7-J bench were in majority, of the judgment? Once a judgment is rendered by a bench, irrespective of the division, it is considered as the view of the entire bench. So, was it a valid reference to a larger bench?"

The matter was placed before a seven-judge bench, which in turn had referred the issue to nine-judge bench in 2016. Attorney general R Venkataramani said he might not support the reasons given by the five-judge bench, but "let that not detain the nine-judge bench now from proceeding with the issue – correctness of 'industry' definition in the Bangalore Water Supply judgment of 1978."

The case had an interesting genesis. Bangalore Water Supply and Sewerage Board had fined two employees for misconduct and deducted the fine amount from their salary in 1972. They had filed a claim petition under the Industrial Disputes Act for recovery of the fine amount. The Board said it is a statutory body providing basic amenities to citizens and hence cannot be categorised as industry. The Industrial Tribunal and Karnataka HC, however, agreed with the employees.

On appeal, the SC on Feb 21, 1978, defined "industry" expansively. Such was the sweep of its ambit that almost everything – temples, universities, colleges, social forestry work, hospitals – came to be defined as industry and those working there got covered as workmen under Industrial Disputes Act.

Finding the definition unacceptable, Parliament in 1982 amended the definition of 'industry', under Sec 2(j) of the Industrial Dispute Act, 1947, but the amendment was never notified making it a dead legislation.

In the year 2020, Parliament enacted the Industrial Relation Code "to consolidate and amend the laws relating to trade unions, conditions of employment in industrial establishment or undertaking, investigation and settlement of industrial disputes and for matters concerned therewith or incidental thereto".

It came into force from November 21, 2025, and the Code has repealed the Industrial Disputes Act, 1947.

AG: Govt obligations to provide for road, health, edu can't be industry

Dhananjay.Mahapatra
@timesofindia.com

Venkataramani told a bench of CJI Surya Kant, others that on many occasions in exercise of sovereign functions related to defence or economy or to fulfill constitutional and statutory obligations, the govt may undertake certain works

New Delhi: Attorney general **R Venkataramani** on Tuesday told a nine-judge Supreme Court bench that the govt's sovereign functions, fulfillment of constitutional obligations and implementation of social welfare schemes cannot be corralled under the expansive definition of 'industry' framed nearly 50 years ago by a seven-judge SC bench.

Venkataramani told a bench of CJI Surya Kant and Justices B V Nagarathna, P S Narasimha, Dipankar Datta, Ujjal Bhuyan, S C Sharma, Joymalya Bagchi, Alok Aradhe and Vipul M Pancholi that on many occasions in exercise of sovereign functions related to defence or economy or to fulfill constitutional and statutory obligations, such as laying of roads and railway tracks and establishing hospitals, schools, colleges and universities, the govt may undertake certain works.

"An approach that mechanically attempts to sever the 'industrial' element of a governmental activity from its broader sovereign or welfare objective risks producing results that may also be both doctrinally unsound and practically unworkable," he said.

Section 2(j) of the Industrial Disputes Act, 1947, provides that 'industry' means any business, trade, undertaking, manufacture or calling of employers and includes any calling service, employment, handicraft or industrial occupation or avocation of workmen. The seven-judge bench's interpretation in the 1978 Bangalore Water Supply case gave a very broad meaning to the term 'industry' bringing universities, hospitals, govt institutions and welfare organisations under the ambit of the Industrial Disputes Act regulating worker-employer relations.

In his written submissions, senior advocate Vijay Hansaria mentioned that the Industrial Dispute Act has been repealed, and a new Industrial Relation Code has come into force. Senior advocates C U Singh and Indira Jaising said the new code is under challenge and the nine-judge bench's fresh attempt to interpret industry must not adversely impact the testing of validity of the new law that removed charities and social work from the ambit of 'industry'.

Dying declarations not reliable as it wasn't recorded as per law: Court

▶ Continued from page 1

Here, we have a case of a gruesome death of a couple when their house was gutted in a fire, with the son and daughter-in-law accused of murder. The entire case is founded on motive; the ill-will the son harboured against the father for not having given him his due share in the ancestral property. The entire village was against the son and the mishap ended in an investigation where truth was sacrificed at the altar of perceived vengeance, ably assisted by the Investigating Officer's selective but careless pursuits, derailing the entire prosecution, the bench said.

Advocate Smarhar Singh, appearing for the elder brother of the accused, tried to convince the court that his younger brother and his wife were guilty and dying declarations of the dying couple also proved it. But the bench said that dying declarations were not reliable as it was not recorded as per the law.

SC: Woman entitled to maternity leave even if child isn't biological

AmitAnand.Choudhary
@timesofindia.com

New Delhi: Observing that the arrival of a child in a family — whether by birth, adoption or surrogacy — involves time, attention and rearing responsibilities to ensure their well-being, Supreme Court on Tuesday ruled that maternity leave was the right of all women, irrespective of whether they gave birth biologically or had a child through surrogacy or adoption.

It struck down a provision mandating that maternity leave could not be granted in case of adoption of a child above three months of age.

A bench of Justices J B Pardiwala and R Mahadevan said maternity benefit was associated not just with the biological process of childbirth but also took into account a holistic understanding of attainment of motherhood and consequent fulfillment of the role. It held that the purpose of maternity protection did not vary with the manner in which the child was brought into the life of the beneficiary mother and parenthood was not confined to the biological act of giving birth.

Finding a flaw in Section 60(4) of Code on Social Security, which says only women adopting children younger than three months are entitled to maternity benefit for a period of 12 weeks, the court said the approach adopted by the legislature while enacting the impugned provision did not reflect real-world requirements.

It said women who adopt a child aged three months or above are similarly placed as women who adopt a child below the age of three months, and the present provision was discriminatory.

Lack of paternity leave reinforces gendered roles in parenting: Top court

▶ Continued from page 1

Parenthood is not a solitary function performed by one parent but rather a shared responsibility in which each parent contributes to the child's holistic development. Although the father is present at the periphery of infancy, yet he is not present in the intimate and irreplaceable way that society has always presumed the mother must be. This acceptance of absence has seldom been examined with the seriousness it deserves. As a result, the cost is borne silently by children who grow up never realising what they lacked, by fathers who were constrained by circumstances to remain distant. At the same time, by mothers who were denied the companionship and support of their partners in the early phase of caregiving, it said.

The court said the lack of paternity leave reinforces gendered roles in parenting and denies willing fathers a meaningful opportunity to contribute. "When fathers are afforded the opportunity to take leave following the arrival of the child, they are able to support mother and share family responsibilities. This support extends to participating in the upbringing and caregiving of the child, assisting with household responsibilities, and remaining emotionally present during this demanding phase," it said.

"In light of the aforesaid discussion on the need for paternity leave, we urge the Union to come up with a provision recognising paternity leave as a social security benefit. We emphasise that the duration of such leave must be determined in a manner that is responsive to the needs of both the parent and the child," the bench said.

Raj HC refuses to reopen 37-yr-old goat killing case

Jaipur: A single-judge bench of the principal seat of Rajasthan HC, Jodhpur, has upheld a 1990 trial court order acquitting a man accused of "mischievously" killing goats he did not own, ruling that reopening the case after 37 years would "neither advance justice nor serve any meaningful purpose", reports Ashish Mehta.

Disposing of a state appeal, Justice Farjand Ali said the Barmer judicial magistrate had made a legal error by accepting a compromise with Ramaram, who was not the owner of the goats. The case dates to 1989. In 1990, the judicial magistrate acquitted accused Moola Ram. Govt challenged that acquittal in 1996.

Justice Ali said the trial court had erred in law because Ramaram was not legally "competent to compound the offence". The court said Bhuraram, the owner of the goats, was the person authorised to enter into such a settlement. TNN

LPG (liberalisation, privatisation, globalisation) has hit industry: SC judge

Dhananjay.Mahapatra
@timesofindia.com

New Delhi: Amidst concerns over shortage of cooking gas because of war in the Gulf region, a nine-judge bench of the Supreme Court testing the correctness of court's 1978 interpretation of 'industry' on Tuesday caught many in the courtroom by surprise when it observed that LPG has impacted industry.

When attorney general R Venkataramani was pointing out the obsoleteness of the nearly 50-year-old expansive definition of 'industry' given the march of time and developmental process, Justice B V Nagarathna, part of the nine-judge bench led by CJI Surya Kant, said, "LPG has impacted the industry considerably." The AG was quick to react – "There is no shortage of LPG in the country today."

It brought smiles on every face when Justice Nagarathna said by LPG she meant liberalisation, privatisation and globalisation. "Since the 1970s, lot has happened on all three LPG fronts and the court would take into account these developments and attempt to test the definition of industry rendered by a seven-judge bench of the SC in 1978 in the Bangalore Water Supply case," she said. It appears that she borrowed the words from a 2019 SC judgment.

AG was again quick to retrieve his wit and said SC had rendered the definition of 'industry half a century ago when socialism was the flavour of politics and economy. "The markets have opened considerably since economic liberalisation in the 1990s," the AG said. Uttar Pradesh, through senior advocate Rakesh Dwivedi's written submissions, referred to the 2019 CCI vs Airtel judgment of the SC mentioning the LPG model. The SC had said, "Indian economy experienced major policy changes in early 90s on LPG Model i.e. liberalisation, privatisation and globalisation."

Remove posts linking mantri's daughter to Epstein, says HC

New Delhi: Delhi HC on Tuesday ordered the removal of social media content linking Union minister Hardeep Singh Puri's daughter, Himayani Puri, to convicted sex offender Jeffrey Epstein within 24 hours, reports Abhinav Garg.

Justice Mini Pushkarna, in the interim order, noted that Himayani had a "prima facie" case in her favour and "irreparable injury" would be caused to her if the content was not removed. The court posted the matter for Aug. The HC also restrained users from publishing or disseminating such content on social media, and said that if users did not remove the posts, the platforms concerned should take down or block access to such content.

Calling the allegations a "figment of imagination", senior advocate Mahesh Jethmalani, appearing for Himayani, said there was an "orchestrated attack" arising from "personal and political malice". TNN

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Last date of receipt of complete applications is April 07, 2026. Detailed advertisement containing eligibility criteria, remuneration, selection process etc. and application form are available on SIDBI's website www.sidbi.in under Career and Recruitment Section. Any modification thereto shall be hosted on SIDBI's website only.

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4.	Manager - Municipal Services	1
5.	Manager - Urban & Regional Planner	1
6.	Assistant Manager - Roads & Other Infrastructure	1
7.	Assistant Manager - EHS	1
8.	Assistant Manager - Mechanical & Electrical	1
9.	Junior Manager - Civil / Water	3

For details on eligibility criteria, qualification, experience, age limit and other terms & Condition, kindly visit career page on our website www.dholera.gujarat.gov.in/jobs and apply online.

Applications submitted online on or before 3rd April 2026, 23:59 hrs will only be valid. No other mode of applications will be accepted.

भारतीय प्रबंध संस्थान शिलॉंग
Indian Institute of Management Shillong

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No. B1-2303/2/2025-ADMN/761 11 March 2026

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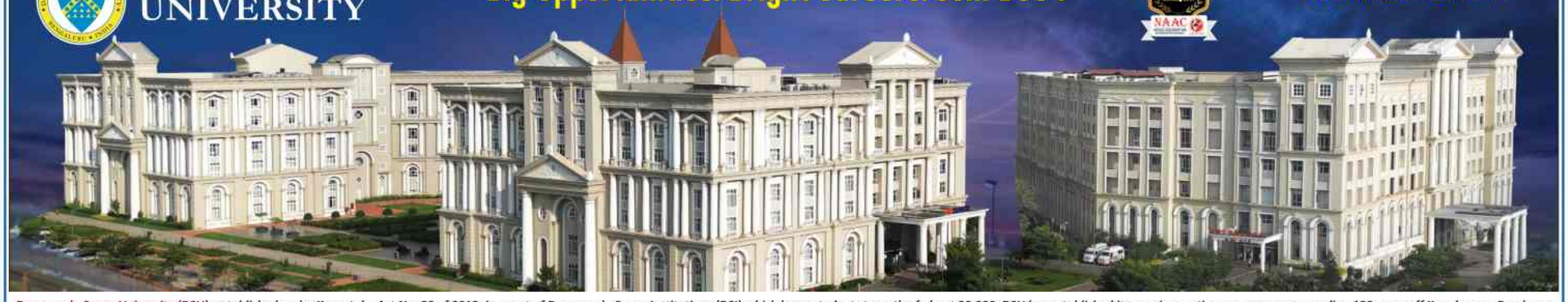

Dayananda Sagar University (DSU), *established under Karnataka Act No. 20 of 2013, is a part of Dayananda Sagar Institutions (DSI) which has a student strength of about 32,000. DSU has established its new innovation campus over sprawling 130 acres off Kanakapura Road near Harohalli. It has Nine schools of study in Medicine, Engineering, Health Sciences, Commerce & Management, Basic & Applied Sciences, Computer Applications, Law, Design & Digital Transmedia, Arts and Humanities. The University offers state-of-the-art infrastructure, excellent academic ambience for professional growth and encouragement to entrepreneurship, innovation as well as incubation.*

The Dayananda Sagar university is currently commissioning an advanced AI Factory powered by 20 NVIDIA DGX B200 systems, establishing one of the densest academic AI compute environments in India. This infrastructure is being developed to support large-scale research, advanced training, and collaborative technology development across multiple disciplines. To operationalise this initiative, DSU is establishing five specialised Centres of Excellence in the areas of Generative AI, Cyber Defence, Robotics & Embodied Systems, Spatial Computing and High-Performance Computing (HPC).These Centres are being designed as interdisciplinary research platforms that will bring together faculty, researchers, industry collaborators, and incubated innovation groups to develop advanced technologies supported by high-performance computing infrastructure.

CHIEF ARCHITECT FOR CENTRE OF AI FACTORY AND GENERATIVE AI

DSU Centre for NVIDIA AI Factory & Generative AI is the Central Brain of DSU AI Factory. This centre drives large-scale generative AI initiatives, including sovereign foundation models such as DSU-GPT and hosts the AI Maker Space where ideas move rapidly from code to real-world products.

Role Overview : The Chief Architect will serve as the main driver of DSU's AI Factory and Generative AI, leading the development of sovereign generative AI systems, large-scale foundation models and rapid AI-to-product pipelines. Responsible for architecting platforms, building elite teams, and converting raw compute power into a deployable intelligence system

Desired Profile : Senior Research Scientist or Technical Leader from Google DeepMind, OpenAI, NVIDIA Research, or equivalent. Strong track record in generative AI, foundation models and product-driven research. Experience in open-source leadership or AI startup creation is highly preferred.

CHIEF ARCHITECT FOR CENTRE FOR HIGH-PERFORMANCE COMPUTING & DATA SCIENCE

This centre drives large-scale generative AI initiatives, including sovereign foundation models such as DSU-GPT and hosts the AI Maker Space where ideas move rapidly from code to real-world products. The Centre will support foundational research in AI, genomics, climate science, astrophysics, materials science and other compute-heavy domains.

Role Overview : The Chief Architect - High Performance Computing and Data Science will serve as the principal architect of DSU's B200 super computing infrastructure, ensuring it functions as a reliable, scalable and high-performance backbone for all Centres of Excellence. This role is responsible for designing system architectures, optimizing compute utilization and enabling large-scale AI, data-intensive science and high-performance computing workloads. In addition to infrastructure leadership, the Chief Architect will drive research in parallel computing, distributed systems, performance engineering, and next-generation AI infrastructure, while training faculty and researchers in best-in-class HPC practices

Desired Profile : Senior architect or leadership role from C-DAC, IISc Super computing Centre or equivalent. Deep expertise in parallel computing, system architecture and AI infrastructure. Proven experience managing large-scale national or academic super computing systems

CHIEF ARCHITECT FOR CENTRE FOR CYBER DEFENCE & SOVEREIGN SECURITY

The Centre will function as a national-grade cyber defence lab, combining AI, big data, cryptography, and real-time systems to develop secure platforms for government, fintech, defence, and critical infrastructure sectors. Focused on AI-driven threat detection, adversarial AI, quantum-safe cryptography, and national-scale cyber simulations, this centre contributes directly to India's digital sovereignty

Role Overview : The Chief Architect - Cyber Defence & Sovereign Security will lead DSU's national mission to design and deploy AI-driven sovereign cyber defence systems for India. This role focuses on building next-generation security architectures capable of defending large-scale digital infrastructure against advanced persistent threats, adversarial AI attacks, and emerging quantum risks.

Desired Profile : Former senior official from CERT-In, DRDO (SAG), or equivalent national security organizations. CISO-level industry leader from fintech, defence, or critical infrastructure domains with a PhD. Deep expertise in adversarial AI, cyber warfare, and large-scale secure systems.

CHIEF ARCHITECT FOR CENTRE OF EXCELLENCE IN SPATIAL COMPUTING (AR / VR / XR)

This Centre will develop advanced XR platforms, large-scale digital twins, and real-time simulation environments for applications across aerospace, healthcare, manufacturing, education, and smart infrastructure. B200-class compute enables photorealistic, streamed spatial environments unconstrained by device limitations.

Role Overview : The Chief Architect - Excellence in Spatial Computing (AR/VR/XR) will pioneer DSU's vision for the Industrial Metaverse, leading research and platform development in extended reality, spatial computing, and neural rendering technologies. The role focuses on creating immersive, photorealistic digital environments that integrate the physical and digital worlds at scale.

Desired Profile: Senior researcher from Meta Reality Labs, Microsoft HoloLens, or similar XR teams. Distinguished academic from institutions such as USC Institute for Creative Technologies or equivalent. Expertise in computer vision, graphics and large-scale real-time rendering systems.

CHIEF ARCHITECT FOR CENTRE FOR ROBOTICS & EMBODIED AI

This Centre will develop Large Action Models (LAMs), reasoning-driven control systems, human-robot interaction frameworks, autonomous humanoids and sim-to-real reinforcement learning at unprecedented scale. The AI Factory enables robots to learn in simulation at massive scale before real-world deployment-unlocking a new class of intelligent machines.

Role Overview : The Chief Architect - Robotics and Embodied AI will lead DSU's efforts to build intelligent humanoid and autonomous robotic systems powered by large-scale learning and reasoning. This role focuses on integrating reinforcement learning, sim-to-real transfer, perception, and cognition to create robots capable of operating in complex, real-world environments. This role also plays a key part in building India's sovereign robotics capabilities by partnering with industry, nurturing startups, and translating research breakthroughs into deployable robotic platforms.

Desired Profile: Senior roboticist from Boston Dynamics, Tesla Optimus, or equivalent advanced robotics teams. Distinguished faculty from CMU Robotics Institute, ETH Zurich or similar institutions. Proven expertise in reinforcement learning, robotic perception and human-robot interaction.

LEAD DATA CENTER ENGINEER

Role Overview : Oversees the entire physical environment. Manages the 350kW+ power envelope and the Coolant Distribution Units (CDUs) and Establishing preventative maintenance for the Direct-to-Chip (D2C) liquid cooling loops.

JUNIOR DATA CENTER TECHNICIANS

Role Overview : 24/7 physical monitoring of Data Center, "remote hands" for hardware swaps and structured cabling and Monitoring rack-level PDUs and manifold pressure.

HPC SYSTEMS ADMINISTRATOR

Role Overview : Management of the NVIDIA Quantum-2 InfiniBand fabric, Slurm job scheduling and GPU driver orchestration and configuring non-blocking communication between all 160 GPUs for large-scale model training.

AI SOLUTIONS ARCHITECT

Role Overview : Acting as a bridge between the hardware and the DSU academic researchers. Helps optimize models for FP8 / FP4 precision and designing the "AI-First" lab environments for the Computational Aerospace & Defence programs.

STORAGE ENGINEER

Role Overview : Managing the 1-2PB All-Flash NVMe parallel file system (WEKA/Lustre) and ensuring storage throughput matches the B200 ingest requirements (200GB/s+).

CYBERSECURITY OPERATIONS LEAD

Role Overview : Hardening the cluster against external threats and managing the integration with the Cyberbit platform and implementing multi-tenant isolation for GaaS commercial clients.

ELECTRONICS MAKERSPACE TECHNICIAN

Role Overview : To assist students, researchers and innovators in building and troubleshooting electronic circuits, working with microcontrollers and embedded systems and guiding them through prototyping processes such as soldering, PCB assembly and testing and also supports the day-to-day operation of the electronics lab by maintaining equipment such as oscilloscopes, multimeters, soldering stations & power supplies, ensuring they are safe and ready for use.

MECHANICAL MAKERSPACE TECHNICIAN

Role overview : Responsible for operating, maintaining and troubleshooting mechanical fabrication equipment such as 3D printers, laser cutters, CNC machines and workshop tools. Supports users in CAD preparation, slicing/ CAM processes, material selection, machine setup, and safe fabrication of prototypes, including basic finishing and assembly.

AI & ROBOTICS LAB TECHNICIAN

Role overview : Responsible for maintaining and operating robotics hardware, embedded systems and AI-enabled lab equipment, including microcontrollers, sensors, actuators, robot kits, development boards, cameras and computing systems. Supports students and researchers in robot assembly, wiring, calibration, testing and troubleshooting, as well as setup of AI/ML environments, sensor integration and data collection systems. Ensures lab safety, manages components inventory and assists in workshops, demonstrations and prototype development.

AR/VR/XR LAB TECHNICIAN

Role overview : Responsible for operating, maintaining and troubleshooting AR, VR, and XR hardware and software systems, including head-mounted displays (HMDs), motion tracking systems, controllers, spatial sensors and high-performance computing workstations. Supports users in setting up immersive environments, installing and configuring XR development platforms (e.g., Unity/Unreal-based workflows), calibrating tracking systems, managing content deployment and ensuring system performance and safety.

The salary offered will be competitive and aligned with industry standards for the above positions

Interested candidates may send their CV with recent photograph within 10 days to :
careers@dsu.edu.in | vc-ceo@dayanandasagar.edu
DSU Main Campus : Devarakaggalahalli, Harohalli, Kanakapura Road, Bengaluru South Dist-562112
Dr. D. PREMACHANDRA SAGAR, PRO-CHANCELLOR

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1	Vice President (Fixed Term)	NaBFID/REC/VP/2025-26/04	5
2	Senior Analyst (Fixed Term)	NaBFID/REC/SNA/2025-26/02	4
3	Senior Analyst (Full Term)	NaBFID/REC/SNA/2025-26/01	25

1. For eligibility criteria (age, experience, job profile etc.), vacancy and other details, please visit the institution's website **https://nabfid.org/careers or scan the QR code.**
2. Refer detailed advertisement to ensure eligibility and other details before applying. Application starts from 18/03/2026.
3. Remuneration will be offered based on qualification, experience, suitability, last drawn salary, market benchmark, as per advertisement. For other information, please refer detailed advertisement on the institution's website.
4. Any addendum / corrigendum / modification in this regard will ONLY be available on the institution's website.
5. Selection will be solely at the discretion of the institution, and its decision will be final.

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Announcement for Extension of Date for Submission of Applications

Attention is invited to the advertisement issued by NISM in this newspaper on February 25, 2026 through which online applications from distinguished academicians, policy professionals, and regulatory experts were invited for the post of Professor (On contract basis) to lead its newly established Centre for Regulatory Studies and Corporate Governance.

The last date for submission of online applications has been extended to March 31, 2026.

Interested candidates may apply online through the **"Recruitment"** section at **www.nism.ac.in**.

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Date : 17.03.2026

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EIL is recruiting motivated and committed Engineering Graduates as Management Trainees in following disciplines through GATE-2026.

S. NO.	DISCIPLINE	GATE PAPER	CODE	VACANCIES
1	Chemical	Chemical Engineering	CH	7
2	Mechanical	Mechanical Engineering	ME	24
3	Civil	Civil Engineering	CE	21
4	Electrical	Electrical Engineering	EE	7

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Interested and eligible candidates who wish to apply for the position of Management Trainee in Engineers India Limited should have appeared in **GATE-2026** examination and cleared the exam in one of the above Engineering disciplines.

Eligible candidates are required to apply separately on below mentioned EIL website. The detailed advertisement outlining, eligibility criteria and other information shall be released on the Company's website at "http://www.engineersindia.com". Online submission of application is permitted for eligible candidates on website between **0000 hours on 20.03.2026 and 2359 hours on 13.04.2026.**

HRD/Rectt./Advt./2025-26/18

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CONTRAPUNTO

Better to reign in Hell,
than to serve in Heaven
– JOHN MILTON, Paradise Lost

Hubris, Then Nemesis

Being blind to the limits of power, seems to come with the territory of having a lot of it. Look at geopolitics

As it went with tariffs, so it's going with Iran war: Trump's 'my way or the highway' posture, reduced to a bad joke. On the war front, not only have developments in Iran defied his prognoses, other nations are refusing to fall in line. Spain has nixed the use of military bases located in its territory, for US operations. It's called the war illegal, and contrary to the interests of humanity. Nato countries are also ignoring his threat of "a very bad future", if they don't send warships to help reopen Strait of Hormuz. Often lackey-like, UK is refusing to be "drawn into the wider war". Germany's defence minister has mockingly asked: what does Trump expect from European frigates, since the mighty US navy can't manage it either?

With tariffs, Trump ridiculed different countries as pleading to him, "Please, please sir make a deal. I'll do anything. I'll do anything, sir." This haplessness is, of course, not the whole story. China played hardball with its rare earths card. Others showed resilience not so much by resisting power, as rerouting around it, starting to reduce their exposure to Trumpian volatility. Even right now, India is stepping up diplomatic engagement with Iran, to secure its energy supplies through Strait of Hormuz. However much Trump can destroy and dominate, he cannot control outcomes. Or foreclose others' choices.

But this is not just about Trump. Being blind to the limits of their power, seems to come with the territory of having a lot of it. Hence, the continuing salience of hubris in different biographies of power. Indira Gandhi pulled off an Emergency, but then was shocked by a dramatic electoral blow. Lance Armstrong was invincible, until he wasn't. Harvey Weinstein was the king of Hollywood, and then he was in jail. Power doesn't see reversals coming. Its Goliath cannot see David standing up to it. Just as Trump didn't see a "fools and lapdogs" (his words, obviously) US Supreme Court giving his tariffs a 6-3 slapdown.

And still, Trumpismo runs on unrepentant. There is talk of Cuba, now. In ancient Greek thought, hubris is more than arrogance. It isn't merely a personality flaw, but a violation of cosmic and social order. And its story arc often goes like this: power→hubris→nemesis. History books may tell US, it helped establish democracy in Japan and Germany. But its 21st century regime-change wars – Iraq, Libya, Afghanistan – don't have such nice giftwrapping. Acting like US has infinite resources, and the ability, to impose its will on others, is actually a self-goal.

No Sides? No Problem

Paltrow, at the Oscars, showed, in her silhouette, what it takes to hold it together

Who won the Oscars is for movie nerds. For the rest, Academy Awards is a spectacle. Sheer fashion theatre – where stars flaunt brand identity, and nominees conceal nerves, in all manner of dress. For Hollywood, there can be nothing worse than the audience forgetting what you wore. Better to be roasted by the internet, than not be noticed at all. And so, this year, the star of the show was no nominee, meh, but 53-year-old Gwyneth Paltrow, in a strapless minimalist ivory Armani dress – with cutout sides – on stage as presenter. The dress's opening was covered by sparkly mesh fabric, or was it tulle pants – it mattered not. Because, for all purposes, it had no sides, and was held together by sheer stardom, a striking silhouette.

Paltrow returned to cinema after nearly a decade, having stepped back to focus on her wellness-lifestyle business. In interviews, the now 53-year-old has said she was "very, very rusty" and "petrified", when she first arrived on the film set of her comeback film, *Marty Supreme*, doubting even her ability to act again. The cutout sides highlighted that precarity. Yet she was seamless with confidence as she walked, moved, sat, climbed stairs – giving internet, even more moments of, ooh, was that *almost* a wardrobe malfunction, or was it deliberate?

And that's just what holding it together is all about. To keep going when a moment can turn messy, even overwhelming. Not about never falling apart, but to get a grip on response, boardroom to stardom, relationships to family life. Yawn? Not quite. It's the power of personality. Of ability to make a statement without a word. Of endurance, fitness. Paltrow's dress was strategy, not drama. No ruffles, no cleavage, no trains, no gold, no glitter, just announcing that, nerves or not, hold it together. And you will be the force to reckon with.

War and peas

The US-Israel offensive against Iran has invaded the great Indian kitchen

Jug Suraiya

Much to its indignant distaste, India is willy-nilly getting a taste, literally, of the conflict raging in Iran and neighbouring countries.

Iran's blocking of Strait of Hormuz, which overnight has become an international buzzword, and through which a great deal of oil and other vital supplies pass, has meant that the West Asian conflict has invaded our country's kitchens.

The real, or rumoured, conflict-generated shortage of LPG cylinders used for cooking, among other things, has not only led to the closure of many small eateries across the country but also affected households, as distant warfare determines the war-affected fare that families get to eat.

Print and social media abound with tips and suggestions about methods of cooking and recipes, which obviate reliance on the errant LPG.

secondopinion

Are induction cooktops better than infrared cooktops? A moot point of much mootness, which is compounded by the fact that no one seems to know what an induction cooktop is, or how it works, and much the same goes for the infrared option, which, moreover, conjures unintended associations with infra dig, denoting inferior or undesirable status.

Which of these LPG-replacing gizmos can make rotis? North India wants to know. Man does not live by roti alone, admonishes South India, and demands to ascertain which one makes better dosas.

Both North and South commiserate with each other that neither can make pakodas or vadas, or indeed anything at all that involves deep frying, including that perennial pan-Indian favourite called Veg Manchurian.

Stick to salads, which necessitate no cooking, exhort health enthusiasts, provoking the righteous rejoinder that lettuce not talk such nonsense about ghaas-phoos, which is more phoos than ghaas.

And for what it's worth, it's cold comfort to reflect that come the midterm American polls in Nov, Operation Epic Fury with its inflationary impact on the price of gasoline in the gas-ravenous US is likely to have a boomerang culinary effect on POTUS and his MAGA devotees, who are made to swallow setback and eat humble pie.

Why Trumpian Hegemony's In Trouble

Iran war is bringing out stress points in his coercive unilateralism. Latest example: his counterterror chief has quit. Post-WW2 elite consensus on American dominance is thinning, globally & in US

Inderjeet Parmar

Prof of Geopolitics, University of London

Trump's second term starkly illustrates a rapidly intensifying imbalance, between consent and force in America's hegemonic strategy. Historically, US favoured waging a patient struggle for hearts and minds, through soft power. Trump's escalating military campaigns, however, exemplify coercion without restraint. But how far can Trump push such a coercive strategy, and what restraints, if any, remain on a president, who seems to have dismantled the guardrails of American liberal democracy?

Trump's actions signal not just geopolitical adventurism, but a profoundly risky reconfiguration of US hegemony. One that may further alienate allies, erode domestic consent, and ignite counter-hegemonic forces globally. Given Trump's ego-driven persona, we should be prepared for wars to continue.

The 'imminent threat' argument | Trump's illegal Iran offensive began with precision strikes on nuclear facilities, escalating to attacks on missile sites, and naval assets. While disputed by Trump, strikes also included an Iranian girls' primary school, killing 165 children. Claiming to neutralise an unproven "imminent threat", Trump has refused to rule out ground troops or regime change. However, Trump's director of National Counterterrorism Center, Joe Kent, resigned yesterday, saying he could not back the Iran war because the country posed no imminent threat to US. Trump, so far, has ignored this development. But this is part of a pattern in his second term, where he has ordered strikes in Somalia, Gaza (bolstering Israeli operations), Venezuela, and the Caribbean. He has also threatened to secure Greenland.

This represents a shift from post-World War II US hegemonic methods, built on consensual alliances, via institutions like Nato and UN, to a coercive unilateralism. The America First doctrine seeks to manufacture domestic consent for these manoeuvres, by portraying them as defensive necessities against 'radical regimes'.

Yet, this is US hegemony in crisis: the liberal international order, once sustained by elite networks of foundations, think tanks, and organic intellectuals, is fracturing under Trump's assault.

Big power games | How far can Trump take these wars? Hegemony endures through a careful balance of force and persuasion. Trump's campaigns, however, could expand into full-scale regional conflagrations, drawing in Qatar and Saudi Arabia. In fact, Trump's war strategy could extend far longer than rationally necessary, as he leverages the post-9/11 Authorization for Use of Military Force (AUMF), to bypass Congress, stretching executive power to authoritarian lengths.

Image: AI

A total war of destruction on Iran, however, profoundly threatens Russian and Chinese interests – disrupting Beijing's discounted oil supplies, endangering shipping through Strait of Hormuz, and potentially drawing Moscow deeper into West Asia entanglements. Both countries have condemned the strikes as aggression, but offered only restrained diplomatic support to Tehran. Neither Russia nor China seeks direct confrontation with a US demonstrating overwhelming force.

Still, Trump, ever the dealmaker, may work to limit the conflict to degrade Iran's capabilities, without triggering broader great-power involvement, which could embolden counter-hegemonic blocs, or complicate his transactional diplomacy with Xi and Putin.

Resisting counter-pressures | Yet, contradictions in Trump's 'art of the deal' transactional approach, are mounting. Witness Trump's flip-flops on allies, as well as on stated adversaries. After denouncing Starmer for rejecting military support for the war on Iran, he has requested allies, as well as China, to send warships to Strait of Hormuz, to protect shipping, as oil prices spike, and Trump's approval ratings suffer.

Hence, restraints are mounting, driven by fissures within Trump's own coalition. Even his MAGA base and its ideologues, wary of endless wars, are rejecting this military interventionism. Polls show Trump's core supporters, who cheered America First as a pledge against Bush-era entanglements, now denounce the betrayals in Gaza, Venezuela, Greenland, and especially Iran. Influential voices like Tucker Carlson, and Vance surrogates, have publicly criticised escalations as draining resources from domestic priorities.

This portends challenges in midterms, where many Republican incumbents face primary threats from anti-interventionist challengers, and voter turnout dips amid disillusionment. This could possibly hand Democrats major Congressional gains later this year.

Force and political scarecrows | True, Trump's coalition – corporate elites, populist nationalists, and military-industrial interests – will likely still challenge the neoliberal consensus, by using coercion where consent falters. Ultimately, Trump's wars will extend as far as fractured consent allows. However, with MAGA defections, midterm perils, mass protests, and the spectre of great-power backlash, constraining escalation, Trump's hegemony may crumble.

Even if Trump can mobilise a large part of his MAGA base through portrayals of Iran as an existential antagonist, elite cohesion is thinner than during earlier interventions. Internationally, the credibility gap is wider, and allies are less willing to fall in line.

The structural machinery for consensus still exists. Yet, its capacity is diminished. Fragmented institutions, polarised publics, and global scepticism limit how far any administration can go. It may simply be too late to recreate a US-led fully manufactured consensus of the old kind.

Dead Atomic Clock In Space...Scary Thing On Ground

From Kargil War to Op Sindoor, India has learned that an indigenous navigation system is critical for its security. But the four-satellite constellation needed for this, is now down to three. NavIC needs urgent medicine

Nithiyanandam Yogeswaran

On 13 March 2026, Isro announced that the atomic clock aboard IRNSS-1F had stopped working, with the satellite completing "its 10-year mission life". While the phrasing was restrained, the impact is worrying.

India's homegrown satellite navigation system, born in response to the hard lessons of the 1999 Kargil War, is now under severe strain. Since 2013, India has launched 11 NavIC satellites, but only three are now reported to provide core navigation services, falling short of the minimum of four needed for reliable positioning.

This is what makes navigation satellites fundamentally different from Earth observation satellites. PNT (position, navigation, timing) services work only when several satellites operate together as a live constellation. Because a receiver must simultaneously "see" at least four satellites, to calculate location, altitude, and time reliably. With only three satellites, it is possible to determine only two-dimensional coordinate information.

Operational navigation systems like GPS, GLONASS, Galileo, and BeiDou have all built large constellations, with dozens of satellites, to get coverage across the globe. In satellite navigation, the constellation is not part of the support infra. It is the core architecture.

At the centre of every navigation satellite is an atomic clock, which provides the precise timing from which all positioning data is derived. If that clock fails, the satellite may still be in orbit, but it can no longer provide reliable navigation. NavIC has faced several such clock-related setbacks over the years, though this is by no means unique to India.

Europe's Galileo also experienced clock anomalies in 2017. Still, the system absorbed them through strong onboard redundancy, refurbishment measures, and a wider second-generation effort to broaden Europe's clock technology base. China appears to have taken a different path, steadily moving BeiDou towards domestically developed improved rubidium clocks, and passive hydrogen masers, backed by a broader redundancy approach for service continuity.

India's own response began to move in that direction in May 2023, when NVS-01 (first of the second-generation navigation satellites) became the first NavIC satellite to carry an indigenous rubidium atomic clock, developed by Isro. With a 12-year design life, it appeared to mark an effort not just to replenish the constellation, but to strengthen its technical resilience.

The present strain is not due to clock failures alone. Difficulties in replenishing the constellation on schedule, including launch-related setbacks, have also weakened NavIC's continuity. What is more worrying is that, of the three satellites currently operational in NavIC, only one is from the second generation, while the other two are nearing the end of their operational lives. This situation creates an urgent need for replacements, to keep the system functioning.

Image: AI

NavIC's issue is not just Isro's problem; it touches systems already spreading across transport, rail, fisheries, and timing infra. Over 10,400 locomotives are equipped with real-time train-tracking systems, over 40,000 fishing vessels carry NavIC receivers, and more than 15L vehicles already use certified NavIC-enabled tracking devices.

In a country with large agri lands, which have started to benefit from precision agriculture and an impressive digital economy that processes billions of UPI transactions a month, sovereign PNT is critical infra. For civilian smartphones, NavIC is an add-on navigation system that improves accuracy, especially as GOI mandates NavIC support for millions of smartphones, manufactured in India starting 2025.

NavIC's strategic importance lies in reducing India's dependence on foreign-controlled navigation in a crisis. Way back in Kargil, reliance on foreign-controlled GPS was exposed as risky, when US reportedly declined to share precise data for the conflict zone. Operation Sindoor later reinforced the value of indigenous precision and networked military systems, even if NavIC's exact operational role isn't deliberated openly. What is not in doubt is that NavIC was designed to give India independent PNT capability, including an encrypted service for authorised users, and that such capability depends on at least four working satellites.

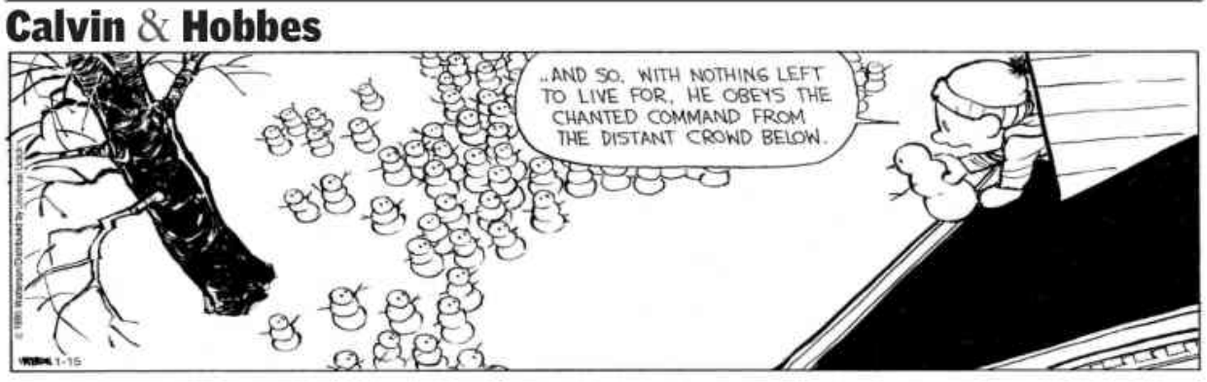
When it comes to its adversarial capabilities, Pakistan is solely dependent on BeiDou for its military operations. BeiDou was launched in 1994, and reached global service by 2020. China claims it supports more than 1tn location-service requests per day, contributed ¥575.8bn in satellite-navigation output in 2024, and offers service in over 140 countries. This indicates the economic value that a functional navigation system can bring, and its geopolitical sphere of influence.

Finally, here are the four key aspects to consider. The most immediate priority is stabilising what remains of the current constellation, whilst simultaneously accelerating the NVS replacement pipeline, because restoring continuity requires both holding the line today and replenishing it tomorrow. Second, complete atomic-clock indigenisation at scale: NVS-01 has already shown the path with an indigenous rubidium clock. Third, build a stronger NavIC ecosystem across chipsets, receivers, standards, developer tools, and expedite the geodetic reference framework, envisaged in National Geospatial Policy. Fourth, upgrade the system through better ground infra, improved signal processing, anti-jamming protection, and regular performance monitoring.

Isro has already demonstrated with NVS-01 that the technical foundation exists, including an L1 service, an indigenous clock, and a 12-year design life. What NavIC needs now is sustained follow-through across the above four fronts, given the serious needs of critical national infra.

The writer heads Geospatial Research Programme, Takshashila Institution

Calvin & Hobbes



Sacredspace

Nationalism, in my opinion, is nothing more than an idealistic rationalisation for militarism and aggression.

Albert Einstein

Arirang: When Nationalism Goes Cultural

Narayani Ganesh

Post their military service hiatus, the K-pop boy band, BTS, after 'disappearing' from public gaze for three years, are making a comeback with their new album, titled *Arirang*, to be released on March 20. Fans are waiting with bated breath for their world tour's kick-off concert, to be held in South Korea's Gwanghwamun Square, on March 21. So why did they and their agency choose this title, and what does 'Arirang' mean?

Arirang is basically a folk song, of which there are multiple variations, themed on romantic longing and reunion, linked to Korean nationalism as a cultural sentiment rather than as a territorial or geopolitical stand. According to Unesco, there are about 3,600 variations of 60 different versions of the song, and these are composed of collective contributions of ordinary Koreans over decades. More than ten years ago, South Korea applied to Unesco to register Arirang as an Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity, and a couple of years later, North Korea did the same. That BTS chose to open their year-long global concert tour with Arirang as their theme, indicates that cultural identity, more than political, religious, or any other identity, is precious and is sure to evoke positive emotional response. Invoking this cultural sentiment is the way to the heart of millions.

During the Japanese occupation of Korea, patriotic songs and national anthem were banned – it was Arirang that gave unofficial expression to their resistance. Curiously, Arirang songs became a craze in Japan as well, as a reflector of Korean culture, giving birth to even more variations and cultural fusion.

THE SPEAKING TREE

According to *fiveable.me* website, "Cultural pride refers to the appreciation, respect, and celebration of one's cultural heritage and identity. This term embodies the positive feelings individuals or groups have towards their traditions, values, and history, fostering a sense of belonging and community. In many instances, cultural pride is expressed through art, literature, music, and other forms of creative expression that highlight unique cultural experiences."

Language is an important part of culture, which is why Tamils get all riled up if anyone tries to trivialise or dismiss what is believed to be the world's oldest living language. Tamil poet Vairamuthu, recent recipient of the Jnanpith Award, said: "To understand South India and its culture, you need Tamil and you need Sanskrit to understand North Indian culture." The people of every region take immense pride in their respective language, as it is their mode of expressing literature, art, and a whole lot of other cultural aspects.

What then, is the difference between nationalism and culture? While cultural pride is about shared heritage, nationalism is aggressive allegiance to a nation with territorial boundaries designated by political authorities. And there is a term that combines culture and nationalism – 'cultural nationalism'. "Cultural nationalism generally refers to ideas and practices that relate to the intended revival of a purported national community's culture. If political nationalism is focused on the achievement of political autonomy, cultural nationalism is focused on the cultivation of a nation," writes Eric Taylor Woods of University of Leeds.

The more evolved person would probably say we should transcend patriotism, nationalism, religion, and culturalism, even cultural nationalism, if we are to tread on an expansive path where no divisions matter. There is no need here for verbal language, or any other aspect of culture, for, the goal is to aspire for complete neutrality that is beyond all of these constructs.

ganeshnarayani@yahoo.com

Zari loses its silver lining as precious metals zoom

Real gold and silver zari yarn is rapidly disappearing as soaring gold prices push manufacturers and buyers toward cheaper, electroplated threads, confining the genuine thing to high-end couture

Anjali.Jhangiani@timesofindia.com

For centuries, India's finest saris and bridal ensembles were bordered and brought to life with real gold and silver thread. Each strand was drawn and flattened with painstaking precision by zari artisans, whose skill was honed over generations. Yet, across India's festive and bridal markets this year, the shimmer in wedding halls is increasingly the result of clever chemistry rather than the fine art of shaping precious metals.

The last five to six years have radically transformed zari production as gold prices have continued to soar. In 2021, gold cost Rs 42,758 per 10 grams; now it is Rs 1,48,465, placing delicate embroidery out of reach for many manufacturers and, consequently, most buyers. The irony, industry insiders say, is that demand for opulence in India — luxury saris, lehengas and heirloom bridalwear — has grown during the same period in which the raw materials behind that grandeur have become unaffordable for most.

FADING SPARKLE: The decline in real zari has affected even traditional strongholds. Weavers admit imitation thread has entered their looms more than ever before

> **Brides today want ensembles that feel rooted in history, and with that comes a renewed love for zari craftsmanship.... Clients are willing to invest when they know the piece carries legacy, craft and the charm of something that will last far beyond the wedding day or the event**
> —**Manish Malhotra,** fashion designer

A Material Change

Surat's position as India's zari capital remains unchanged, but the raw materials running through its factories have been completely transformed. Traditionally, zari threads were made from gold and silver. Today, the city produces more than 600 tonnes of copper and brass wire each month, electroplated to mimic the warm glow of gold and the cool shimmer of silver.

Sanmukhlal Kinkhabwala, CEO of Ratilal Kinkhabwala & Sons, sees the shift as irreversible. "Most mass-production units, such as ours, have not been manufacturing real gold zari for the last decade or so," he says.

Metallic yarn zari — a modern, lightweight, non-tarnishing embroidery thread made from metallised polyester film and designed to emulate traditional gold or silver zari — costs around Rs 300 per kilo. Imitation zari, made from copper or brass wire, costs around Rs 2,500 per kilo.

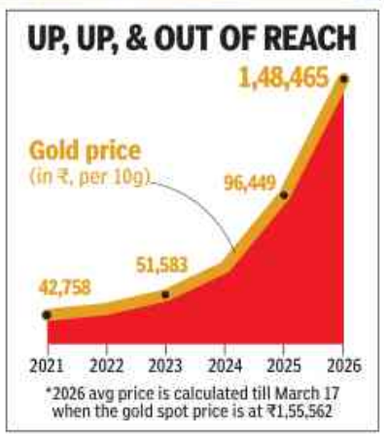
"Yarn zari has captured 50% of the market," Kinkhabwala says, adding that imitation zari has a 40% share. Real zari manufacture, he says, has fallen sharply since Covid: pure silver zari now accounts for less than 10% of the market, while gold zari is made only on special demand. At current gold rates, real gold zari would cost several crores a kilo.

Surat already accounts for 55% of India's total zari production, with more than 15,700 units and roughly 1,05,000 artisans directly employed in zari-making, and another 50,000 indirectly. Many of these workers are migrants from Bihar, forming an unorganised labour pool with low wages, often earning between Rs 7,000 and Rs 9,000 a month, frequently for seasonal work.

A 'Hybrid Market'

Yet, even in the face of harsh economics, the craft continues — only with different materials. The decline in real zari has affected even traditional strongholds. Varanasi and Kanchipuram still weave pure-zari saris, but weavers there admit imitation thread has entered their looms more than ever before. A pure-zari sari today can easily cost upwards of Rs 5 lakh, a price few buyers can afford. The result is what insiders describe as a "hybrid market", where buyers continue to seek the nostalgia, storytelling and aesthetic of heritage textiles, but with far more affordable threads.

Fashion designers are witnessing this shift first-hand, as requests for real zari have nearly disappeared. Swati Patel, a designer at Surat-based Sajitha Couture, says an entire generation of brides has moved away from real gold zari.



"I have not received an order for real gold zari since I started working a couple of years ago. Designers can get gold-plated zari thread and carry out whatever embroidery is required, but it is very, very expensive, now that gold rates have soared past the Rs 1-lakh mark. Even 10 years ago, most brides wanted real zari. Nowadays, such demand from clients is rare," Patel says.

Legacy Weave

At the couture end of the fashion spectrum, however, the legacy of real zari remains intact — though preserving it now demands far greater investment. Manish Malhotra, whose bridal creations are synonymous with grandeur, says real zari is now both rare and highly specialised, but still in demand for high-profile weddings. For his label, sourcing it is deliberate and tightly controlled.

"Sourcing real zari is a very conscious and specialised process," he says. "Weaving and embroidery are two completely different things, and the sourcing reflects that. For woven textiles, we collaborate closely with artisans who still produce real gold and silver zari in the traditional way. For embroidery, the thread comes from trusted artisans who understand exactly the rate, purity and the weight of metal required. The craft is guided not just by artistry, but also by the value of the metal itself."

Malhotra believes the craft is still alive, though it has moved into a niche space reserved for heirloom pieces, luxury bridalwear and families seeking something to treasure for generations.

"Brides today want ensembles that feel rooted in history, and with that comes a renewed love for zari craftsmanship," he says. "Aari and zardozi continue to be incredibly popular because people love the depth, the richness, the work by hand. Most of our zari requests sit beautifully on silk fabrics like Banarasi silks, handwoven silks and classic katan. There's something timeless about zari on silk. Clients are willing to invest when they know the piece carries legacy, craft and the charm of something that will last far beyond the wedding day or the event."

The sheen of zari may be changing, but its cultural pull has not vanished. Indian bridalwear still glitters — only now, that glow is more often born of copper and plastic than of gold and silver.

Archaeologists allege illegal mining at the prehistoric site of Bhatala is destroying irreplaceable evidence of early human history

How mining is eating into a 2mn-yr-old site in Maha

Sarfaraz Ahmed & Mazhar Ali | TNN

Papamiya Tekdi, on the outskirts of Chandrapur city, is recognised as one of Maharashtra's largest Stone Age sites. Documented since the late 1950s, it once yielded thousands of Acheulian (Lower Palaeolithic) hunting tools, offering evidence of early human presence dating back over 150,000 years.

This rich trove of history, however, is in danger of getting lost forever because of illegal mining and unfettered construction activity.

Archaeologists say a similar story is unfolding at Bhatala village, about 80km from Nagpur. Researchers from Nagpur University (NU) say Bhatala is part of a wider prehistoric landscape, more than two million years old, linked to early human activity along the Wainganga-Wardha river systems. Field surveys have found red quartzite artefacts, hand axes, cleavers and scrapers — tools that help explain how early humans lived, hunted and moved through the region.

The Palaeolithic period accounts for over 95% of human history, yet key questions about India's earliest inhabitants — their origins, migration routes and adaptive strategies — remain unresolved. Sites like Papamiya Tekdi and Bhatala offer rare clues through the tools, geological layers and spatial patterns found there.

In 2025, Nagpur University researchers formally flagged Bhatala as vulnerable, warning that alleged mining and blasting in and around the site could destroy deposits that have survived for millions of years. Bhatala's value lies in what rests on and just below the surface, such as Palaeolithic tools embedded in quartzite, red sandstone and chert. Archaeologists say quarrying has crept dangerously close, despite the site having no mineral wealth.

At Papamiya Tekdi, a govt medical college and a cancer hospital were approved in 2014. Even after fresh Stone Age tools were found there in 2019, construction continued in 2020, permanently altering the prehistoric landscape, say researchers.

In Nov 2018, the state govt approved a prehistoric museum-cum-archaeological park on a four-acre plot at the site, but eight years later, the project remains on paper. Independent researcher Amit Bhagat, in an appeal to Pravin Pardeshi, chief economic adviser to the chief minister, said that despite the state cultural affairs department announcing a Rs 258-crore heritage revitalisation package in 2023, no progress had been made in securing or developing the site.

Signboards marking the protected area at Papamiya Tekdi were found to be virtually blank or defaced

Archaeologists from NU alleged that signboards marking the protected area were removed or defaced. A spot visit revealed that the signboards were virtually blank. After a **TOI** report, the state archaeology department did survey the site and ask district authorities to curb mining and trespassing, but violations continue to this day, the researchers allege.

At Bhatala, a 10th-century temple listed by the Directorate of Archaeology and Museums also faces risk as the surrounding prehistoric deposits remain unfenced and poorly demarcated.

District officials deny any violations. Warora tehsildar Yogesh Kautkar said no destructive activity was taking place within the prohibited area and that mining was being done beyond the restricted radius, with permissions. Archaeologists dispute this, arguing that once an area is established as a prehistoric site, mining should be avoided altogether.

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National Highways Authority of India
(Ministry of Road Transport and Highways)

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BUILDING A NATION, NOT JUST ROADS

RANI CHANNAMMA UNIVERSITY
Vidyasangama, National Highway – 04, Bhootaramanahatti, Belagavi – 591156 (**NAAC Accredited with B+ Grade • 2021**)
E-mail: rcubphd2018@gmail.com Phone No.: 0831-2498257
registrar@rcub.ac.in
Office of the Registrar

Ref No: RCU/Belagavi/RD/Advt-128818/2025-26/6540 Date:17.03.2026

-: Notification of Ph.D. Admission 2025-26:-

Online applications are invited from eligible candidates through UUCMS for admission to Ph.D. programme in various departments of Rani Channamma University, Belagavi, PG Centre Vijayapur and Sangolli Rayanna First Grade Constituent College, Belagavi for the academic year 2025-26.

Interested candidates can submit their applications through UUCMS portal by visiting the website https://uucms.karnataka.gov.in and send the downloaded application along with certified supporting documents (hard copy) and D.D./online receipt to the Chairperson/Co-ordinator of the concerned department within the last date. For more details log or to University website **www.rcub.ac.in.**

Note: If any technical problem arises in UUCMS, candidates may submit Application-A downloaded from the University website to the Chairman of the respective departments.

Sd/-
The Registrar

"EoI NOTICE"
EXPRESSION OF INTEREST (EoI)
FOR

Selection of Master Developer for the Development, Operation and Maintenance of Sant Kabir Textile and Apparel Parks at (i) Amroha, JP Nagar, (ii) Baheri, Bareilly, (iii) Nagina, Bijnor, (iv) Maghar, Sant Kabir Nagar in the state of Uttar Pradesh on Design, Build, Finance, Operate and Transfer (DBFOT) basis.

Government of Uttar Pradesh intends to develop a Greenfield Textile and Apparel Parks at **(i) Amroha, JP Nagar, (ii) Baheri, Bareilly, (iii) Nagina, Bijnor, (iv) Maghar, Sant Kabir Nagar**, under the Sant Kabir Textile and Apparel Parks Scheme of the Government of Uttar Pradesh. The project seeks private sector participation through selection of a Master Developer for development and operation of the park on DBFOT basis.

Interested parties are invited to submit their Expression of Interest (EoI) in accordance with the guidelines outlined in the EoI document.

The EoI document was published on the e-Tender Portal (https://etender.up.nic.in) and on the website of the Directorate of Handloom and Textiles, Government of Uttar Pradesh (DoHT) (https://handloom.upsdc.gov.in) on 17-03-2026. The EoI document can be accessed and downloaded from the above portals up to 17:00 hours of 31-03-2026. For any enquiries or clarifications related to this EoI, please contact to the Joint Commissioner via email at dhtup@rediffmail.com; and to the Consultants on mobile no. 9140920105 and 9934301425.

All other details including date extensions, clarifications, amendments, corrigendum etc. will be uploaded on the websites https://etender.up.nic.in, https://handloom.upsdc.gov.in and will not be published in newspapers. Interested parties shall regularly visit the website to keep themselves updated.

Date: 18th March 2026

Place: Kanpur, Uttar Pradesh

Commissioner & Director,
Handloom and Textiles,
Government of Uttar Pradesh.

E-AUCTION

AMRITSAR IMPROVEMENT TRUST, AMRITSAR

Under the guidance of Hon'ble Chief Minister Shri Bhagwant Singh Mann and as per the directions of Hon'ble Minister of Local Government Shri Sanjeev Arora Ji, the Improvement Trust Amritsar is conducting an e-auction of the available Chunk Sites in its premium and well-developed schemes/colonies. Details are as follows :

Date and Time of Registration start for bidders and deposit earnest money (EMD) :	Date : 27-02-2026, Time : 10:00 AM
Last date and time of Registration and deposit earnest money	Date : 27-03-2026, Time : 5:00 PM
Online bidding start date and time :	Date : 28-03-2026, Time : 10:00 AM
Online bidding closing date and time :	Date : 30-03-2026, Time : 5:00 PM
E-Auction Portal :	www.tenderwizard.com/DLGP

Sr. no.	Type of site	Name of Scheme	Area	Reserve Price	Earnest Money	Total price, from which amount the bidding is to start
1	Mixed Land Use (Booth/Shop/ SCF/SCO/Miniplex/Cinema/ Multiplex/Shopping Complex/ Shopping Mall/Hotel & Motel/ Club/Guest House/ Service Apartment)	District Shopping Centre (Ajnala Road)	1.61 acres (7792.40 sq. yards)	Rs. 2,00,000 per sq. yard	Rs. 7,79,24,000/-	Rs. 155,84,80,000/-
2	Mixed Land Use (Booth/Shop/ SCF/SCO/Miniplex/Cinema/ Multiplex/Shopping Complex/ Shopping Mall/Hotel & Motel/ Club/Guest House/ Service Apartment)	District Shopping Centre (Ajnala Road)	1.65 acres (7986 sq. yards)	Rs. 2,00,000 per sq. yard	Rs. 7,98,60,000/-	Rs. 159,72,00,000/-
3	Mixed Land Use (Booth/Shop/ SCF/SCO/Miniplex/Cinema/ Multiplex/Shopping Complex/ Shopping Mall/Hotel & Motel/ Club/Guest House/ Service Apartment)	97 Acre Scheme, Ajnala Road (Block-D)	3.50 acres (16940 sq. yards)	Rs. 2,00,000 per sq. yard	Rs. 16,94,00,000/-	Rs. 338,80,00,000/-
4	Mixed Land Use (Booth/Shop/ SCF/SCO/Miniplex/Cinema/ Multiplex/Shopping Complex/ Shopping Mall/Hotel & Motel/ Club/Guest House/ Service Apartment)	97 Acre Scheme, Ajnala Road (Block-D)	3.25 acres (15730 sq. yards)	Rs. 2,00,000 per sq. yard	Rs. 15,73,00,000/-	Rs. 314,60,00,000/-
5	Area Reserved for Commercial Building	Bhai Gurdas Ji Nagar (340 Acre Scheme, Block-B)	0.46 acres (2226.40 sq. yards)	Rs. 1,00,000 per sq. yard	Rs. 1,11,32,000/-	Rs. 22,26,40,000/-
6	Area Reserved for Special Purpose (MS Flats/Group Housing)	Bhai Gurdas Ji Nagar (340 Acre Scheme, Block-B)	2.35 acres (11374 sq. yards)	Rs. 1,00,000 per sq. yard	Rs. 5,68,70,000/-	Rs. 113,74,00,000/-
7	Mixed Land Use (Booth/Shop/ SCF/SCO/Shopping Complex/ Club/Guest House/ Service Apartment)	Shri Guru Teg Bahadur Nagar (Maal Mandi Scheme, Block-A)	2.21 acres (10696.40 sq. yards)	Rs. 70,000 per sq. yard	Rs. 3,74,37,400/-	Rs. 74,87,48,000/-
8	Area Reserved for Special Purpose (Commercial)	Shri Guru Teg Bahadur Nagar (Maal Mandi Scheme, Block-A)	1.96 acres (9486.40 sq. yards)	Rs. 70,000 per sq. yard	Rs. 3,32,02,400/-	Rs. 66,40,48,000/-
9	Mixed Land Use (Booth/Shop/ SCF/SCO/Miniplex/Cinema/ Multiplex/Shopping Complex/ Shopping Mall/Hotel & Motel/ Club/Guest House/ Service Apartment)	Shri Guru Teg Bahadur Nagar (Maal Mandi Scheme, Block-B)	4.27 acres (20666.80 sq. yards)	Rs. 70,000 per sq. yard	Rs. 7,23,33,800/-	Rs. 144,66,76,000/-

NOTES :- This auction will be conducted under the Punjab Management and Transfer of Municipal Properties Act 2020 and the Punjab Management and Transfer of Municipal Properties Rules 2021, as amended on 31-01-2026. Conditions and complete auction information are available at https://www.tenderwizard.com/DLGP. For additional queries, contact Superintendent Cell, Mobile : **98144-17676**, or visit the Trust office.

Sd/-
Karamjit Singh Sandhu,
Chairman,
Improvement Trust Amritsar.

Sd/-
Rajesh Kumar,
Executive Officer,
Improvement Trust Amritsar.

DPR/Pb.: 3742/12/2025-26/9433

PSPCL Punjab State Power Corporation Limited

Regd. Office : PSEB Head Office, The Mall, Patiala-147001
Corporate identity Number : U40109PB2010SGC033813
Website : www.pspcl.in
Office :- OFFICE OF THE CHIEF ENGINEER/GGSSTP, PROCUREMENT CELL-1, RUPNAGAR Phone No 01881-275289

Expression of Interest

Office of the Chief Engineer/GGSSTP, Procurement cell-1, Rupnagar invites Expression of Interest (EOI) from interested parties for "Consultancy for Environment Management Framework for GGSSTP, Ropar". Detail of the scope of work is available at our website www.pspcl.in Last date for submission 01-04-2026 at 11.00 AM.

NOTE :- Corrigendum and amendment, if any will be published online at official PSPCL Website **www.pspcl.in**

RTP-33/26, DPR/Pb.:1079/12/2025-26/9571

H.P. STATE CIVIL SUPPLIES CORPORATION LIMITED.

BLOCK 16 &17, SDA COMMERCIAL COMPLEX, KASUMPTI SHIMLA-9 (HIMACHAL PRADESH) (INDIA)
Phone No. 0177-2621583
Email:himapurtimd@gmail.com

GLOBAL E-TENDER NOTICE

Himachal Pradesh State Civil Supplies Corporation Limited, Shimla invites Global E-Tenders for the procurement of **FORTIFIED MUSTARD OIL for three months supply/six months supply (as the case may be).** The detailed tender notice, tender documents and other instructions can be down-loaded or viewed on-line from the portal https://hptenders.gov.in. The last date of submission of sample shall be till 31.03.2026 upto 3.00 PM and for earnest money deposit, tender document fee & processing fee shall be till 30.03.2026 upto 5.00 PM and on-line tenders shall be till 21.04.2026 upto 5.00 PM. The tenders of Fortified Mustard Oil shall be opened on 22.04.2026 at 11.00 AM.

Managing Director

Karnataka Public Works Department

Office of the Engineer-in-Chief, PRAMC, PWD, Bengaluru-560001

No.: EIC/PWD/05/PRAMC/2025-26/1974 Date: 17.03.2026

SHORT TERM TENDER

The Executive Engineer, PRAMC, KPWD on behalf of Governor of Karnataka, invites Short-Term Tender for 1 Road and 1 Building works in Chikkamagaluru District. 1 Building work in Belagavi District and 1 Building work in Dharwad District. Further details can be obtained from KPP Portal (https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in) from **18.03.2026, 05:30 PM** onwards.

Sd/-, Executive Engineer, PRAMC, KPWD, Bengaluru

DIPR/CP/LC/6329/2025-26

PSPCL Punjab State Power Corporation Limited

Regd. Office : PSEB Head Office, The Mall, Patiala-147001.
Corporate Identity Number U40109PB2010SGC033813
Website : www.pspcl.in (Contact No. 96461-22185)

Tender Enquiry No. 375/SS(D)-II | **Dated: 18.03.26**

Dy. CE/Substation Design/ TS Organization, C-1 Shakti Vihar, PSPCL, Patiala invites E-tender for Manufacture, Testing, Supply & Delivery of 900 nos. SCADA-Compatible 11kV Vacuum Circuit Breakers (11kV VCBs). For detailed NIT & Tender Specification, please refer to https://eproc.punjab.gov.in from 18.03.26 (9:00AM) onwards.

Note : Corrigendum and amendments, if any, will be published online at https://eproc.punjab.gov.in

C 399/26, DPR/Pb.:1079/12/2025-26/9580

राजस्थान सरकार
कार्यालय अधीक्षण अभियन्ता सार्वजनिक निर्माण विभाग वृत अलवर

सा.नि.वि. परिसर अशोका टॉकीज के पास, कचहरी रोड, अलवर
फोन – 0144-2737038 Email : sealw.pwd@rajasthan.gov.in

क्रमांक-निविदा/अलवर/3787 दिनांक 12.03.26

Corrigendum Of Short-Term NIT No 24/2025-26

Bids for Permanent Restoration Work Pratapbandh to karni-mata temple Road Alwar Work under juridaction of Div Alwar are invited from interested bidder up to 12-03-2026 06:00 PM. **Now according to the corrigendum in the public date, its receipt is till 18-03-2026 6:00 pm.** Other particulars of the bid may be visited on the procurement portal (http://eproc.rajasthan.gov.in and http://sppp.raj.nic.in of the state and http://pwd.rajasthan.gov.in departmental website. The approximate value of the procurements is 495.57/- Laces.

UBN No: - PWD2526WSOB24119
NIB No :- PWD2526A5843
DIPR/C/5463/2026

-:E-Sign:-
Superintending Engineer
PWD Circle Alwar

Directorate of Employment and Training

DR. JIVRAJ MEHTA BHAVAN,
BLOCK NO. 1, THIRD FLOOR, GANDHINAGAR-382010
Email: director-det@gujarat.gov.in

EXPRESSION OF INTEREST (EOI) for Imparting Foreign Language Training at Government ITIs of Government of Gujarat in a PPP Mode

Directorate of Employment & Training (DET), Govt. of Gujarat invites Expression of Interest (EOI) from eligible agencies for Foreign Language Training (Japanese/German/Russian/Arabic) at Government ITIs under PPP mode. Interested parties must submit the EOI Response with the required documents in person submitted in person with details of EOI mentioned in the website **https://employment.gujarat.gov.in/** on **18/03/2026**. It should be sent by post to the above-mentioned address. For more information refer to the above website.

Last Date: **02/04/2026 (18:00 hrs)**
Pre-EoI Meeting: **27/03/2026**
Address: Directorate of Employment and Training, Dr. Jivraj Mehta Bhavan, Gandhinagar-382010 E-mail: director-det@gujarat.gov.in
The Decision of authority on the selection process will be binding for all. The Final Decision will be made by the Director Employment and Training.

INF/2846/25-26

Recall

GOVERNMENT OF PUNJAB
Municipal Corporation Amritsar
Tender Reference No. E-Tender Notice No. 184 Date 16.03.2026

The Department of	:	Municipal Corporation, Amritsar Invites Bid for "Construction of Heritage Entrance Gate around Walled City Amritsar" (Amt. Rs. 6,08,05,561/-)
Closing Date and Time	:	27.03.2026 upto 03:00 PM
EMD	:	2% of Estimate Amount.
For Detail log onto	:	https://eproc.punjab.gov.in
Note	:	Any Corrigendum(s) to the tender notice shall be published on the above website only.

Superintending Engineer (c), Municipal Corporation, Amritsar.

DPR/Pb.:1596/12/2025-26/9585

SBI
State Bank Of India

Applications are invited from Cert-In empaneled Information System Audit Organizations (ISAOs) for empanelment with IS Audit Wing, State Bank of India, Internal Audit Department, Hyderabad for conducting IS & IT Audits for the period from 01.04.2026 to 31.03.2029. The RFP document is made available in https://etender.sbi site from 16.03.2026 up to 15.04.2026. Technical Bids can be submitted up to 15.04.2026, 5.00 PM.

SBI reserves the right to withdraw from the process or any part thereof, to accept or reject any / all offer(s) at any stage of the process and / or modify the process or any part thereof or to vary any terms without assigning any reasons. No financials obligations will accrue to SBI in such an event. SBI shall not be responsible for non-receipt of correspondence sent by post /e-mail / courier / fax.

18.03.2026

Deputy General Manager (IS & CS Audit, IAD, Hyderabad)

महा मेट्रो MAHARASHTRA METRO RAIL CORPORATION LTD.

(A joint venture of Govt. of India & Govt. of Maharashtra)
PUNE METRO RAIL PROJECT
A-3 Block, Beside Civil Court Interchange Metro Station, Shivajinagar, Pune-411 005. 020-26051072
E-mail: pdtender.pmrp@mahametro.org | www.punemetrorail.org

Tender Notice No. P1PD-55/2026 **Date: 18-03-2026**

Name of Work: Licensing of Co-Branding Rights of Select Metro Stations of Pune Metro Rail Project for a Period of 5 years.

To view this tender notice (NIT), an interested bidder may visit the Maha-Metro website i.e. **www.punemetrorail.org**

Can download the Tender documents and obtain further details regarding the Tender from e-tender portal of Govt. of Maharashtra **https://mahatenders.gov.in from 17:00 Hrs. on 20/03/2026 to 16:00 Hrs. of 15/04/2026.**

General Manager (TP & Procurement-PD), Maha-Metro, PMRP

Pune Metro : City's Transport Solution

ಕರ್ನಾಟಕ ವಿಶ್ವವಿದ್ಯಾಲಯ, ಧಾರವಾಡ
KARNATAK UNIVERSITY, DHARWAD

NAAC Accredited with "A"Grade 2022
"University with Potential for Excellence"
ಪಾವಟೆ ನಗರ, ಧಾರವಾಡ
Pavate Nagar, Dharwad.
ದೂರವಾಣಿಸಂ : 0836-2215358 **Tel Ph. No : 0836-2215358**
E-mail:kudgad@gmail.com, gad@kud.ac.in, Website :www.kud.ac.in
ಸಾಮಾನ್ಯ ಆಡಳಿತ ವಿಭಾಗ
G.A.D.
"ಚುನಾವಣಾ ಪರ್ವ ದೇಶದ ಗರ್ವ"

ನಂ.ಕವಿ/ಜಿಎಡಿ/2025-26/TDR3 ದಿನಾಂಕ : 07-03-2026

TENDER-NOTIFICATION (Through e-Procurement)

Applications are invited from the eligible Contractors/Agencies to provide the services of Security Labours for 11 months for serving in various Departments / Administrative Sections / K.U.P.G Centres at Karwar and Gadag and Campuses of Constituent Colleges & Public School. Interested tenderers may participate by quoting their rates through e-procurement portal **https://www.kppp.karnataka.gov.in.**

(1) Tender No : **KU/GAD/2025-26/, Dated : 09.03.2026 (2)** Tender Publishing Date : **09.03.2026 (3)** Approximate Tender Amount (11 month) : **Rs.2,55,04,468/- (4)** Tender Form uploading Date : **09.03.2026 afternoon 13.00 hr (5)** Last Date for Tender Form uploading : **08.04.2026 afternoon 13.00 hr (6)** Pre-bid meeting date & place : **24.03.2026 afternoon 04 pm, Place: Registrar Secretariat, KU Dharwad (7)** Opening of Technical bid : **09.04.2026 afternoon 13.05 hr (8)** Opening of Financial bid : After opening technical bid. **11.04.2026 afternoon 4 pm (9)** EMD amount of Tender : **Rs.10,20,179/-** (paid through e-procurement) **(10)** Name and Address for corresponding authority : **The Registrar, Karnatak University, Pavate Nagar, Dharwad-580003. Telephone No. 0836-2215358.**

DIPR/Dwd/1363/DeshpandePublicity/2025-26

Sd/- Registrar

JODHPUR VIDYUT VITARAN NIGAM LIMITED

(TW Wing) NEW POWER HOUSE, INDUSTRIAL AREA, JODHPUR-342003
PHONE: (0291) 2742336, FAX: (0291) 2745259

SHORT TERM E-PROCUREMENT TENDER NOTICE

Techno-commercial and Price short term e-Bids are invited for TNTW-789 for "Supply, erection, testing and commissioning of material/equipment for 17.00 Km Single circuit O/H 33 KV line with ACSR Dog Conductor T-off from 33 KV NEWA feeder, 02 nos. new 33 /11 KV Sub-station IGNP-II and IGNP-III,110.65 km single circuit O/H 11 KV line with ACSR Rabbit conductor and 53 Nos. new 11/0.4 KV sub-stations under AEN(O&M) Bap of Phalodi Circle, Jodhpur Discom against deposit Work of IGNP on turnkey basis" under TNTW-789.

(UBN No. JVV2526WLOB00940)

Details regarding Quantity, Tender cost, Earnest Money, Schedule date of tender opening etc are available on our website at **www.energy.rajasthan.gov.in/jdvvnl** and also at **www.eproc.rajasthan.gov.in.** The bidders, in their own interest are requested to read very carefully the tender documents before submitting the bid only through on line on website **www.eproc.rajasthan.gov.in.**

Note :- Interested bidders please note that in future any other notices /information regarding amendment / corrigendum/addendum/dates extension of bid submission eetc for above tender will only be available on website **www.eproc.rajasthan.gov.in, sppp.rajasthan.gov.in, energy.rajasthan.gov.in/jdvvnl.**

Raj.Samwad/C/25/22649 **SUPERINTENDING ENGINEER (TW)**

बिजली संबंधी शिकायतों के लिए टोल फ्री नम्बर 1800 180 6045

PSPCL Punjab State Power Corporation Limited

(Regd. Office PSEB Head Office, The Mall, Patiala-147001)
Corporate Identification Number (CIN) : U40109PB2010SGC033813
Web site : www.pspcl.in (Contact Number 9646118754)

Tender Enquiry No. 351/HPs/EDII/RSD-165 **Dated: 16.03.2026**

Dy. CE/ Hydel Projects, PSPCL, Shed A-3, Shakti Vihar, PSPCL, Patiala Invites E-Tender for Supply, Erection, Assembly, Testing & Commissioning of following pumps at RSD Powerhouse :-

1. **Two no. Drainage submersible pumps along with accessories for replacement of existing drainage VT pumps of service bay.**
2. **One no. non-clog sewage submersible pump set having auto coupling/ decoupling with delivery pipe using guide rail for dewatering of muddy water of water sump for replacement of one no. JYOTI Make 150KW VT pump.**
3. **One No. Submersible pump with control panel and flexible hose pipes with coupling to dewater RSD Powerhouse in case of emergencies.**

For detailed NIT & tender specification please refer to **https://eproc.punjab.gov.in** from **20.03.2026** onwards.

NOTE : Corrigendum and Addendum, if any will be published online at https://eproc.punjab.gov.in

C 400/26, DPR/Pb.:1079/12/2025-26/9595

Rajiv Gandhi University of Health Sciences, Karnataka

4th T Block, Jayanagar, Bengaluru 560041
registrar@rguhs.ac.in Tel : +91-80-29601928

No. RGUHSB/PROC/GEN/169/2025(121709) Date: 17/03/2026

E- TENDER NOTIFICATION (RFP)

The Registrar Rajiv Gandhi University of Health Sciences invites tender for HIRING OF SERVICE PROVIDER FOR PROVIDING SERVICE OF WEB STREAMING TO THEORY EXAMINATION CENTRES AT RGUHS. More details on the Service are provided in the attached Terms of Reference.

Tender No. RGUHSK/2025-26/SE0029/CALL-2

1	Tender document available for downloaded	16-03-2026, 17:21 Hrs.
2	Pre-Bid Meeting	23-03-2026, 11:30 Hrs.
3	Last date for Receipt of Tender	30-03-2026, 17:30 Hrs.
4	Opening of Technical Bid	01-04-2026, 11:30 Hrs.
5	Opening of Financial Bid	04-04-2026, 11:30 Hrs.
6	Place of Opening of Tender	Rajiv Gandhi University of Health Sciences, Bengaluru

More details can be fetched from website **https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in**

DIPR/CP/6314/AKAR/2025-26

Sd/- Registrar

AHMEDABAD MUNICIPAL CORPORATION
LIGHT DEPARTMENT
TENDER NOTICE

AMC invites sealed competitive bids from interested Bidders for the below mentioned work

1 Request for Proposal (RFP) for Appointment of a Consultancy Agency as a Project Management Unit (PMU) for Ahmedabad Municipal Corporation for Providing Technical Assistance in Planning, Implementation, Monitoring, Accessing Climate Finance, and Reporting of Activities and Interventions for Net-Zero, Sustainability, and Climate-Resilient Ahmedabad

Online Submission up to	Date : 06/04/2026 Only up to 04:00 PM
Last Date of Submission of (Hardcopy)	Date : 08/04/2026 up to 05:00 PM.
Tender details available on	https://tender.nprocure.com

MAHARASHTRA REMOTE SENSING APPLICATIONS CENTRE (MRSAC)

MRSAC Campus, S.A. Road, Nagpur-440 010 Website www.mrsac.gov.in

TENDER NOTICE
e-Tender Notice No: MRSPC/AMRUT 2.0/04/2026

Online Tenders (e-tender) are invited by the Director, MRSAC Nagpur from the reputed Firms/Bidders for **GIS Database Creation and Master Plan Formulation for AMRUT-2 Cities in Maharashtra State.** The details of tender can be viewed and downloaded directly from the Govt. of Maharashtra e-Tendering portal: http://mahatenders.gov.in from 16.30 P.M. of 17.3.2026. The last date of submission of bids is 27.3.2026 up to 3.00 P.M. Tender fees INR 20,000/- (Rupees Twenty Thousand only) (non-refundable) and EMD (bid security) of INR 5,00,000/- (INR Five Lakh only) to be remitted online. Right to accept or reject any or all tender is reserved by the Director, MRSAC, Nagpur

Director MRSAC, Nagpur

AGRICULTURE PRODUCE MARKET COMMITTEE
VIJAYAPUR- 586 101.

Neelkanteshwar Market Yard, Indi Road, Vijayapur
No:Amd:APMC/VJ/Dev/1744/2025-26 Date 16.03.2026

TENDER NOTIFICATION (THROUGH KPP PORTAL)

DEMOLISHING AND RECONSTRUCTING OF COMPOUND WALL ADJACENT TO APPROACH ROAD AT TORAVI VILLAGE UNDER JURISDICTION OF APMC VIJAYAPUR. (UNDER ANNUAL ACTION PLAN 2025-26)
INDENT NO:- APMC/2025-26/OW/WORK_INDENT901
Amount put to Tender Rs. 70,02,597=79 (Excluding GST).
E.M.D. Amount Rs.1,40,060=00

TENDER HAS BEEN CALLED THROUGH KPP PORTAL TO EXECUTE THE ABOVE WORK. PRE-BID MEETING AND TENDER DISPUTE RESOLUTION **DATE: 27-03-2026** AT 11.30 AM **VENUE**: ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE MAIN MARKET YARD, VIJAYAPUR, LAST DATE & TIME FOR SUBMISSION OF TENDER IS **06-04-2026** UP TO 5.30 PM, FOR FURTHER DETAILS CONTACT DURING OFFICE HOURS AND VISIT THE WEBSITE https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in

Sd/- Secretary APMC Vijayapur | **Sd/- Administrator APMC Vijayapur**

ಪ್ರಾಪ್ತಿಸ್ಥಾನದ/ಮಾರಾಟದ/ಸ್ವೀಕೃತಿಯ/ದಿನಾಂಕ/2025-26

Karnataka Power Transmission Corporation Limited

(CIN : U40109KA1999SGC025521)

TENDER NOTIFICATION

(THROUGH KARNATAKA PUBLIC PROCUREMENT PORTAL ONLY)
No.: B31/SEE(IT)/EE(IT-4)/66245/2025-26 Date: 17.03.2026

KPTCL invites bid through KPP Portal against enquiry No: **KPTCL/B31/SEE(IT)/66247/16/2025-26** for **"Engaging Technical Manpower for Transmission Asset Digitization Works at GIS Cell in KPTCL".** The bids will be received through e-procurement mode only. The detailed notification regarding the enquiry can be obtained by logging onto KPTCL website: **https://kptcl.karnataka.gov.in** with hyperlink **'E Procurement KPTCL'** or to **https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in** on or after **18.03.2026, 6:00PM.** Other details can be obtained from the office of the undersigned.

Sd/- Chief General Manager(Technical), KPTCL, Corporate Office, 11th Floor, Indhana Bhavana, Ananda Rao Circle, Bengaluru – 560 009.

MADHYA PRADESH RURAL ROAD DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY

(AN AGENCY OF PANCHAYAT & RURAL DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT, GOVERNMENT . OF M.P.)
3rd Floor, Vikas Bhawan, Arera Hills, Bhopal (M.P.)
(GST No. 23AAATM9054A3ZX)

No. 2785/22/D-12/SQC /MPRRDA/2026 Bhopal, Dated : 16.03.2026

NOTICE INVITING TENDER FOR SQC CONSULTANCY
(E-Procurement Notice)

Online bids are invited from the consultants fulfilling the required qualification criteria for Supervision and Quality Control Consultancy of Rural Roads being constructed under PMGSY & Other Works for the following districts.

- **No. of Packages – 106**

Name of Districts/PIU –Agar (Malwa), Alirajpur, Annupur, Ashoknagar, Balaghat, Barwani, Betul, Burhanpur, Bhind, Bhopal, Chhatarpur, Chhindwara, Damoh, Datia, Dewas, Dhar, Dindori, Guna, Gwalior, Harda, Narmadapuram, Indore, Jabalpur, Jhabua, Katni, Khandwa, Khargone, Maihar, Mandla, Mandsaur, Mauganj, Morena, Narsinghpur, Neemuch, Niwari, Pandhurana, Panna, Raisen, Rajgarh, Ratlam, Rewa, Sagar, Satna, Sehore, Seoni, Shahdol, Shajapur, Sheopur, Shivpuri, Sidhi, Waidhan, Tikamgarh, Ujjain, Umaria & Vidisha.

- **Cost of Bid Document, Bid Security (EMD) and service charges as appearing on e-procurement portal are to be paid simultaneously through Debit Card/Credit Card/ Internet Banking or system generated challan. For detailed procedure of online payment of EMD and submission of affidavit please refer condition number 2 of detailed NIT.**

1. RFP document may be seen, downloaded and purchased from our e-procurement website **https://mptenders.gov.in** from 17:30 hrs on **23.03.2026.**
2. Last date of Submission of bid is **date 22.04.2026 upto 17.00 hrs.**

Other details & conditions may be seen in the detailed NIT, Tender document for SQC of Roads and Bridge works **March, 2026** on our Website **http://mptenders.gov.in.**

CHIEF GENERAL MANAGER (TENDER)

M.P. Madhyam/124947/2026

'मेरी सड़क' एप डाउनलोड कर फीडबैक देकर राष्ट्र के विकास में सहयोग दें।

SOUTH WESTERN RAILWAY

E-(IREPS) Tender Notice No: 51 UBL 2025-26 Dated: 11.03.2026

The undersigned, on behalf of the President of India, Invites E-Tenders (IREPS) for the following works:

Sl.No.	Name of work	Approx. Value
1	**Hubballi Division:** Supply of Welding in Sr. Divisional Engineer / Head Quarters / Hubballi Jurisdiction.	Rs. 1,15,73,588.00
2	**Hubballi Division:** Strengthening of Pit Line in Hubballi Yard.	Rs. 2,31,94,626.00
3	**Hubballi Division:** Proposed Construction of station approach road along with storm water drain and improvements to land scapping in lower circulating area at Hubballi Railway Station.	Rs. 5,36,06,217.00
4	**Hubballi Division:** Proposed Construction of Type-II (16 Units) at Vidyaranya Nagar Railway Colony in lieu of quarter No. 1327 (A-P) Hubballi.	Rs. 4,06,71,104.00
5	**Hubballi Division:** Supply of weld in Sr. Divisional Engineer/West/Hubballi Jurisdiction.	Rs. 1,11,01 ,321.00
6	**Hubballi Division:** Kudgi (KDGI) - Proposed Construction of New Running Room at Kudgi (24 Rooms / 48 beds).	Rs. 3,22,39,095.00

Last date for submission of bids: **Upto 11:00 Hrs. on 09.04.2026**

For details log on: www.ireps.gov.in

Sr. Divisional Engineer/Co-Ordination Hubballi

PUB/1000/AAMO/PRB/SWR/2025-26

Download the **RailOne** app. RailOne is the all-in-one railway app by Indian Railways. Passengers can book reserved tickets, unreserved tickets, platform tickets, and season passes, check PNR status, order food, and access many more services at their fingertips. Use digital payment to book unreserved tickets through **RailOne** app, and enjoy up to a **3%** discount.

South Western Railway - SWR | SWRRLY | SWRAILWAYHQ | sw_railways

S. E. RAILWAY – TENDER

Tender Notice No.: DRMENGGRNC-11&14-2026, Dated: 16.03.2026. Divisional Railway Manager (Engg), South Eastern Railway, Ranchi for & on behalf of President of India, invites e-Tender for the following works: **Sl.No.-1. Notice No.: DRMENGGRNC-11-2026. Name of work:** Hatia : Improvement and upgradation of 395 unit Type-II and 03 unit Type-IV quarters at Hatia Railway Settlement under the jurisdiction of ADEN/Settlement/Hatia. **Tender Value:** ₹ 8,54,62,930.65. **EMD Value:** ₹ 17,09,300/-. **Sl.No.-2. Notice No.: DRMENGGRNC-14-2026. Name of work:** Improvement and major repairs of existing staff quarters in the Ranchi-Tori section under the jurisdiction of ADEN/Settlement/Hatia. **Tender Value:** ₹ 1,90,42,163.66. **EMD Value:** ₹ 3,80,900/-. **Tender closing date & time:** 10.04.2026 at 15.00 hrs. (for Sl.No. 1 & 2). Tenderers can visit the website **www.ireps.gov.in** for online tendering.

(PR-1311)

MANGALORE ELECTRICITY SUPPLY COMPANY LIMITED

(A Government of Karnataka undertaking)
Corporate Office, "MESCOM BHAVANA", Bejai, Mangalore - 575 004
Ph: 0824-2885755 CIN: U40109 KA 2002 SGC 030425

No.MESCOM/GM/AHOPER/29/2024-GM ADM HR/21649/2026 Date: 17.03.2026

Notification

Sub: Publishing of Provisional Selection List of Junior Powerman Posts - Reg.

Ref: 1. Employment Notification No: KPTCL/B16/44853/2023-24 Dated: 14.10.2024
2. Document Verification Notification No: MESCOM/GM (A&-HRD)/ Personnel/29/2024/CYS-1 Dated 25.02.2025
3. Endurance Test Notification No: MESCOM/GM/AHOPER/29/ 2024-GM ADM HR/1499 Dated: 17.05.2025
4. This Office Notification No: MESCOM/GM/AHOPER/29/ 2024-GM ADM HR/21846/2026 Dated: 17.03.2026

In pursuance to KPTCL Employment Notification dated 14.10.2024, the Cut-Off Marks along with the Provisional Selection Lists of Endurance Test qualified candidates selected on merit on the basis of marks secured in the SSLC/10th Standard for the post of Junior Powerman (NKK) in MESCOM is published in MESCOM Website **https://mescom.karnataka.gov.in**

Sd/-
General Manager (A&HRD) (I/c)

For Power Related Complaints & Assistance Call Toll Free Number 1912

BENGALURU EAST CITY CORPORATION

Office of the Executive Engineer K.R.Pura Division
Old Madras Road, K.R.Pura, Bangalore-560036

No: BECC/EE/KRP/TN/04/2025-26 Date: 16.03.2026

INVITATION FOR TENDERS (SHORT TERM)

(Through GOK KPP Portal https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in only)

The Executive Engineer, K R Pura Division invites Item Rate tenders from eligible tenderers for the work details in the table given below. The Tenderers shall be registered in Bruhat Bangalore Mahanagara Palike /CPWD/KPWD/Railways/MES/ any State or Central Govt. organization.

Sl. No.	Name of the Work
1.	Asphalting of Roads and Improvements of Drains at Bethal Nagara, Munisawappa Layout, Muneshwara Layout, SV Layout, Domanic Layout Ashwini Layout, Gayathri Layout, Priyadarshini Layout and Surrounding Area in Ward No-92 Basavanapura. **Estimate Amount : Rs. 165.00 Lakhs, EMD : Rs.2,47,500.00**
2.	Asphalting of Roads at SBI Colony, K V layout, Club Road and Surrounding Areas in ward No-91 KR Pura. **Estimate Amount : Rs. 70.00 Lakhs, EMD : Rs.1,40,000.00**

Calendar of Events : (1) Last date of submission queries: **25.03.2026 within 11.00 A.M (2)** Date & time for Pre Bid Meeting : **25.03.2026 at 11.30 A.M (3)** Last Date & Time for receipt of tenders : **30.03.2026 Upto 4:00 P.M. (4)** Date & Time for Opening Technical bid : **01.03.2026 at 4.30 P.M (5)** Date & Time for Opening Financial bid : **04.03.2026 at 4.00 P.M**

Sd/- Executive Engineer, KR Division, Zone-2, BECC

32001/212/2526

GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA
PROJECT: DAM REHABILITATION AND IMPROVEMENT PROJECT PHASE-II (DRIP-II)
REQUEST FOR BIDS NO NCB-13/DRIP-AMIC/2025-26
Letter. No 241 Date: 17.03.2026

NATIONAL OPEN COMPETITIVE PROCUREMENT
(Two-Envelope Bidding Process with e-Procurement)
(FOR ITEM RATE/ADMEASUREMENT CONTRACTS IN CIVIL WORKS)

NAME OF WORK	:	Rehabilitation, Improvement and Basic Facility of Gundurapasi Dam in Dhenkanal District under DRIP-II
PERIOD OF SALE OF BIDDING DOCUMENT	:	From **Time 10.30 Hours on 24.03.2026 To Time 15.00 Hours on 22.04.2026**
TIME AND DATE OF PRE-BID MEETING	:	**Date 07.04.2026 Time 11.30 Hours**
LAST DATE AND TIME FOR RECEIPT OF BIDS	:	**Date 22.04.2026 Time 15.00 Hours**
TIME AND DATE OF OPENING OF BIDS- Technical Part	:	**Date 23.04.2026 Time 16.00 Hours**
PLACE OF OPENING OF BIDS	:	O/o The Additional Chief Engineer, Angul Minor Irrigation Circle, Dhenkanal, AT- Dhenkanal, PO/Dist-Dhenkanal, Odisha, Pin- 759001
OFFICER INVITING BIDS	:	Additional Chief Engineer, Angul Minor Irrigation Circle, Dhenkanal, AT- Dhenkanal, PO/Dist- Dhenkanal, Odisha, Pin- 759001, Email: **ace.dk12023@gmail.com**

Sd/-
Addl.Chief Engineer, Angul Minor Irrigation Circle, Dhenkanal

March, 2026

OIPR-32001/32522/1/25-26/0002

KARNATAKA INDUSTRIAL AREAS DEVELOPMENT BOARD

(A Government of Karnataka Undertaking)
No.2, 2/1 and 2/3, Kalidasa Marg, 1st Main Road, Gandhinagar
Bengaluru - 560 009. Phone No. 080-22265383, website: www.kiadb.in

IADB/ENGG/ETND-EP-95/3965/2025-26 **Date: 16.03.2026**

SHORT TERM NOTICE INVITING TENDER
(Through GOK Karnataka Public Procurement Portal Only)

Item Rate Tenders under two cover bid system is invited for the work mentioned below as per the Karnataka Transparency in Public Procurement Act 1999 and Rules 2000 through electronic procurement from eligible Contractors who have got adequate financial resources, suitable construction equipments, technical man power & sufficient past experience for the the following works as per the schedule given below:

Name of the Works : 1) Construction of Rigid Pavement (Cement Concrete) Roads in 24m wide 1st cross road (Balance length) & 15m wide 3rd Main Road & Balance length of 15m wide 2nd cross (canal road) construction of RCC Side drains & RCC Culvert, construction of pump house and laying of Water supply pipeline at Sarathi Kurubarahalli 1st Stage Industrial Area, Harihara Taluk, Davangere District (2nd call).

2) Upgradation of roads, construction of Rcc side drains SWD & Jungle Clearance & De-Silting of drains in Kunigal Industrial Area Phase-1 & Phase-2, Kunigal Taluk & Tumakuru District.

The last date and time of receipt of tender is : **01.04.2026** upto **4.30 pm.**

Applicants May Download Bidding Documents from the Karnataka Public Procurement Portal **https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in.**

Sd/-
Chief Engineer-1, KIADB Bengaluru

DIPR/CP/6298/Zen/2025-26

TIMES BUSINESS

THE TIMES OF INDIA, BENGALURU | WEDNESDAY, MARCH 18, 2026

THE RISING COST OF WAR RISK

War tensions push insurance costs sharply higher, with premiums surging and broader economic risks building beyond direct claims

BY THE NUMBERS

x20

War-risk premium (Hormuz) Up to 20x normal

Typical premium Approx 0.25% of insured value

Total insured value $25bn

Ships in Gulf region Approx 1,000

Pollution liability cap Approx $500mn per event

WHAT'S DRIVING THE SURGE

Higher-risk routes cost more Insurers are sharply raising prices or refusing cover on risky routes

Many ships, bigger risk Large number of vessels **increase chances of multiple losses at once**

Indirect risks are larger **Inflation, falling asset values and loan defaults** could hurt more than actual war claims

Source: Fitch Ratings

Tata Steel plans to merge Neelanchal Ispat with itself

Mumbai: Tata Steel plans to merge Neelachal Ispat Nigam (NINL) with itself as part of a broader strategy to simplify its corporate structure and enhance operational synergies. The company acquired NINL from the govt in July 2022 for Rs 12,100 crore and, under the disinvestment terms, was required to maintain it as a separate legal entity for three years—a period that has now concluded. In addition, Tata Steel will infuse $2 billion into its subsidiary T Steel Holdings. TNN

Retail participation in G-secs picking up: RBI

Mumbai: Retail participation in govt bond market is gradually gaining traction, with secondary market activity witnessing a sharp surge, according to latest RBI Retail Direct data. Traded volumes in the secondary market segment have risen 3.7 times over the past year on the RBI Retail Direct platform, reflecting growing interest. AGENCIES

Silver jumps ₹6k/kg, gold rebounds ₹1k/10g

New Delhi: Precious metals rebounded by up to 2%, with silver gaining Rs 6,000 to Rs 2.6 lakh/kg, and gold rising to Rs 1.6 lakh/10gm on Tuesday, according to All India Sarafa Association. Analysts said the rebound was supported by safe-haven demand amid geopolitical tensions, even as global cues remained subdued. AGENCIES

SBI raises ₹6k cr at coupon rate of 7.05%

Mumbai: State Bank of India, the country's largest lender, raised Rs 6,051 crores on Tuesday at a coupon rate of 7.05% through its second Basel III compliant Tier 2 bond issuance for the current financial year. The bonds are issued for a tenor of 10 years, with call option after 5 years. TNN

figure it out

35%

of India's remittances originate in Gulf countries, while the region accounts for 15% of India's exports

Source: ASK Wealth Advisers

Economy weathered several storms, remains strong: FM

'Ramping Up Gas Output, Funds Provided To Buy Fertiliser'

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi: Finance minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Tuesday said that the Indian economy has weathered several storms over the last few years, starting with the Covid crisis, and remains strong, while seeking to comfort cooking gas consumers and farmers.

Replying to a debate on the second batch of supplementary demands for grants in Rajya Sabha, she said govt was working to ensure availability of LPG (cooking gas) by ramping up production, while also allocating funds to start procuring fertiliser for winter crops. "Additional subsidy of Rs 19,230 crore to import fertiliser for the rabi, given the prevailing external circumstances has been provided. We are equipped for kharif, but from now we will start bidding for the winter, Nov-Dec onwards."

The minister asserted that macroeconomic fundamentals were strong and govt had invested in building domestic capability. "India's economy today stands at a position of strength. We are able to look after even unforeseen circumstances. Since Covid, India's macroeconomic performance has remained relatively strong and stable. Despite newer problems coming up every year, we have managed the economy so that there are no severe shocks... we are able to maintain balance within our economy and now West Asia crisis has also come up with new challenges," she said.

FM said that 90% of India's import of cooking gas was routed Strait of Hormuz, where movement of ships is restricted. "There are enough reports on how we are ensuring a steady flow during these turbulent times." Sitharaman said domestic production of cooking gas had been stepped up and that was supporting flows.

"To ensure that households do not suffer, not only steady streams of shipping lines coming in, but domestically we have also ramped up the capacity for production of LPG, diverting from other hydrocarbon material to LPG production. As a result, domestic supplies will be adequately streamlined, and supplies will remain steady," she said, seeking to comfort consumers.

FM said PM Narendra Modi's emphasis on self-reliance and increasing production to meet the country's basic demands has helped India. "Steady policy backed up approach by govt of India has resulted in us being able to suddenly improve on something so that any situation, in which any additional support can happen. It is a result of a decade-long energy transition strategy launched by PM in 2014."

> Since Covid, India's macroeconomic performance has remained relatively strong and stable. Despite newer problems coming up every year, we have managed the economy so that there are no severe shocks...
>
> To ensure that households do not suffer, not only steady streams of shipping lines coming in, but domestically we have also ramped up capacity for production of LPG (cooking gas)
>
> —Nirmala Sitharaman, Finance minister

Health cover for all by 2033: Sitharaman

New Delhi: Health insurance is a priority for this govt and it is expected that the country will have insurance for all by 2033, finance minister Nirmala Sitharaman said in Rajya Sabha on Tuesday. Replying to supplementary queries during Question Hour, she said the insurance sector is expanding and during 2024-25 it covered 58 crore lives. In Dec 2025, the minister said govt came up with a bill to hike FDI in the insurance sector with an aim to increase its penetration and deepen the market. AGENCIES

Sensex up 568pts as energy supply chain turmoil slows

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Mumbai: Rising for the second consecutive session, sensex went above the 76,000 mark again on Tuesday amid a continuing bounce-back rally as the global energy supply chain disruptions showed signs of slowing. The rally was helped by a positive closing on Wall Street on Monday night. Sensex raced up despite strong foreign fund selling that remained unabated since the war in West Asia started on Feb 28.

The day's session started on a positive note, but soon fell in the red zone. After gyrating between the red and the green zones, a late rally took the index to close at 76,071 points, near the day's high of 76,304 points. It was up 568 points or 0.8%.

ONE DAY AT A TIME

On the NSE, Nifty also treaded a similar path as sensex to close at 23,581 points, up 172 points or 0.7%.

"Apart from the relatively stable global markets, optimism surrounding the partial normalisation in global supply chains and stability in the rupee supported the rebound," said Ajit Mishra, SVP - Research, Religare Broking. "However, elevated crude oil prices (that are) still hovering above the $100 mark, continue to pose a key overhang. Persistent FII outflows are also keeping participants cautious despite the near-term bounce," Mishra said.

Tuesday's gains in the two leading indices were backed by strong buying by domestic funds that recorded a net inflow figure of Rs 5,225 crore while foreign funds were net sellers at Rs 4,741 crore, BSE data showed.

Rupee rises marginally

The rupee rose 0.05% to 92.37 against the dollar as corporate dollar demand and worries over impat of elevated energy prices were blunted by state-run banks' dollar sales, most likely on behalf of the central bank.

Govt eyes insurance facility for shipping cos

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi: Amid the ongoing conflict in West Asia and disruptions in the Strait of Hormuz that have left several ships stranded, govt is once again looking at the creation of a Protection and Indemnity (P&I) club for shipping companies and vessels, which will reduce reliance on foreign insurers, bolster maritime insurance capacity, and avoid sanctions.

The plan was discussed a few years ago but govt did not proceed with it as tension in West Asia subsided.

Responding to a question on Tuesday, Rajesh Kumar Sinha, special secretary in the shipping ministry, said talks with the department of financial services (DFS) were underway. "Two-three days back also, we took up the subject with the DFS. We have also commissioned a study on this, which is underway. The report based on the study should be with us very soon. We will move on the basis of the report. It will be an important step for us," he said.

Global shipping lines and businesses are grappling with heavy war surcharge imposed by insurane companies due to high risk in the region.

P&I clubs are mutual insurance associations that provide insurance to shipowners and operators from third-party liabilities by covering risks such as oil spills, cargo damage, pollution, collisions, and crew injury. In 2023, FM Nirmala Sitharaman had spoken about the need for a domestic P&I mechanism to reduce India's dependence on overseas marine liability insurers.

At present, over 90% of global ocean-going ships are insured through International Group of P&I Clubs, the 13-member group that provides liability cover to around 60,000 vessels.

Lufthansa adds capacity to meet travel demand

Saurabh.Sinha
@timesofindia.com

Mumbai: The Israel-Iran war will "in medium term" alter international traffic flows to and from India. With the big Gulf carriers, which carried a significant percentage of this traffic till last month via their hubs like Dubai, Abu Dhabi and Doha, not available for now, the demand for travel on other airlines has skyrocketed. One of the biggest foreign airlines here, Lufthansa, is adding capacity in the short-term and also evaluating the option of bringing more group airlines here, Lufthansa senior VP (sales, distribution and marketing) **Frank Naeve** told **TOI**.

"Right now, our focus is on bringing people home to safety from West Asia and ensure continued connectivity in the current times. India is especially important to us as it is the second biggest international market for us after the US. We are close to utilising the maximum traffic rights in India. Still (this month we are investing with significant capacity increases by deploying bigger aircraft here, given the demand. We have deployed (500-seater) Airbus A380 instead of the (280-seater) A350 between Munich and Delhi, and Mumbai and Munich. There are additional frequencies between Chennai and Frankfurt," Naeve said

Group airline SWISS will operate a second daily service between Delhi and Zurich between March 19 and 24. "Many travellers are having to change their original travel plans and are looking for alternative routes back to Europe or onward to Asia. Consequently, demand is currently high for the existing SWISS connections between Delhi and Zurich, which are already largely fully booked," the Lufthansa group airline said on Tuesday.

"As of now only three group airlines — Lufthansa, SWISS and ITA — fly to India. There are others carriers in the group that do not fly here including Austrian, Brussels Airlines, discover and Eurowings. While these are early days, we are evaluating bringing more of our group airlines here," Naeve said.

Deals not hit by West Asia war: L Catterton

Asmita.Dey@timesofindia.com

Mumbai: The West Asia war hasn't slowed down the pace of investments for L Catterton in India which is betting on the country's long-term growth potential where a large cohort of young and digital savvy consumers alongside rising incomes bode well for consumption, providing enough and more investment opportunities, top executives at the firm said.

"Even if disruption happens, inflation creeps up a bit with the crisis in West Asia, India today has the wherewithal and resources to battle its way through the short-term crisis that may happen. When we look at India and the consumption story, we should not be shaken by the short-term turbulence. India is going to be the largest consumer story for many years to come," said Sanjiv Mehta, executive chairman at L Catterton India.

> **'India Going To Be Largest Consumer Story'**
>
> Even if disruption happens, inflation creeps up a bit with the crisis in West Asia, India today has the wherewithal and resources to battle its way through the short-term crisis that may happen. Even if oil prices remain high for an extended period, the Indian economy is in shape to take the shock. India is going to be the largest consumer story for many years to come— **Sanjiv Mehta** | EXECUTIVE CHAIRMAN, L CATTERTON INDIA

Backed by French luxury group LVMH and Groupe Arnault, the family holding company of LVMH CEO Bernard Arnault, US-based L Catterton is in the midst of raising a $400 million India-focused fund (with an option to expand it to $600 million), its first for the region as the consumer-focused private equity firm seeks to ramp up deals in India, where global and local investors are lining up to get a slice of one of the world's hottest consumer markets. In 2024, the company roped in Mehta, former CEO & MD at Hindustan Unilever (HUL) to lead their India investments.

"About 75% of our deal pipeline is proprietary. None of them has been impacted by the West Asia crisis. For us, the opportunity for investments is in many ways far greater than the current market," said Vikram Kumaraswamy, partner at L Catterton India. adding that as consumption shift from unbranded to branded and unorganised to organised gains pace, it will widen the scope to invest.

L Catterton has backed Indian companies including Haldiram's, Drools, Sugar Cosmetics and Jio. Prior to the launch of the India fund, its investments in the country used to be routed through its Asia funds. Of the targeted $400 million, close to $200 million has been raised as part of the first close. The firm has deployed over $100 million through the India fund so far, making three investments--Farmley, Haldiram's and Healing Hands Clinic in a span of six months compared to its earlier pace of four investments in two years through the Asia fund.

Mehta and Kumarawamy said that L Catterton does not engage in 'bidding wars' and all its investments have been made at a 20%-40% lower valuation on an average over market benchmarks. "We don't just provide capital which in many ways we believe is a commodity, but we help the investing companies with building capabilities," said Mehta.

Drools and Haldiram's are the two portfolio firms that are IPO-ready, the executives said. Following the Haldiram's deal, several family-run businesses have approached L Catterton for potential investments, Mehta said. "We will invest wherever we can create value. India is such a big market, even at the bottom of the pyramid, you can create value if you have a cost advantage," said Mehta.

Why gold loans offer win-win proposition

Precious Metal No Longer Hocked Just By Those In Distress | Less Paperwork Eases Lenders' Stress

Mayur.Shetty
@timesofindia.com

Mumbai: Behind the triple-digit growth numbers in gold loans is a structural change in the way Indians are viewing their family jewellery. Hocking the ornaments of the women of the house, which was earlier seen as a sign of distress borrowing, is now being viewed as a way to monetise ancestral jewellery and bring down the cost of financing a business.

Historically, gold loans were dominated by borrowings below Rs 2.5 lakh, as these borrowers accounted for 60% of gold loans. According to credit bureau CRIF, in FY25 their share dipped to 51%, and for the first eight months of this fiscal only 40% of loans are for below Rs 2.5 lakh. In 2015, RBI attempted to bring out the gold idling in household lockers through a gold monetisation scheme that would provide interest on gold deposited with banks. The catch was that ancestral jewellery would need to be melted into bullion, tested for purity, and then deposited with banks.

GOLD LOANS DO WHAT GOLD MONETISATION SCHEME COULD NOT

- Gold loans no longer seen only as emergency loans
- 40% of borrowers are owners of MSMEs seeking to raise cheap loans for business
- Gold loans have managed to do what RBI's gold monetisation scheme could not
- They enable owners to get loans at single-digit interest rates
- Whether it is process, documentation requirement, or time taken, the requirements for gold loans are a fifth of what they are for loans against property
- According to a Morgan

However, owners saw the melting of jewels as the destruction of artistic value, and the scheme did not succeed. "Gold loans have managed to do what the gold monetisation scheme could not. While the craze of wearing jewellery has gone down, the desire to own gold has not. Gold loans enable owners to get loans at single-digit interest rates," said Shripad Jadhav, head of Bharat Banking at Kotak Bank.

According to Jadhav, gold loans are set to overtake loans against property to become the second-biggest loan category after home loans. "Whether it is process, documentation requirement, or time taken, the requirements for gold loans are a fifth of what they are for loans against property," said Jadhav. He added that gold loans are no longer emergency loans and that 40% of borrowers are owners of MSMEs seeking to raise cheap loans for business.

According to a Morgan Stanley note in October 2025, India holds 34,600 tonnes of gold, which has a market value of Rs 550 lakh crore. As against this, the value of gold loans in India is around Rs 15 lakh crore, against which Rs 25 lakh crore worth of gold is pledged.

Hard Rock Cafe, JSM clash over ops as duo parts ways

Shilpa Phadnis & Supriya Roy | TNN

Bengaluru: Hard Rock Cafe's parting of ways with its India franchise partner appears unlikely to be amicable, with both sides disputing the brand's operations in the country.

While JSM Group said it was shocked by what it described as a "unilateral, illegal and entirely misconceived" announcement across news platforms regarding the alleged closure of Hard Rock Cafes in India, Hard Rock International told **TOI** that India remains an important market for the brand and that the developments will not affect the Hard Rock Hotel Goa, which continues to operate.

JSM, the Indian partner that operates Hard Rock Cafe outlets in the country, said the Hard Rock Group's unilateral claims fall outside the contractual framework, particularly as JSM has raised a substantial monetary claim against the company. "While we are evaluating our options, our immediate priority remains our employees, loyal customers, partners and suppliers in India who have supported and operated the brand for over two decades," the company said.

JSM added that Hard Rock Cafes in India will continue to operate as usual unless a court of competent jurisdiction orders otherwise.

Hard Rock International, meanwhile, has formally terminated its agreements with JSM, revoking the latter's rights to operate Hard Rock Cafe outlets and Rock Shops across India. The brand currently operates 10 cafes in the country, including three in Bengaluru and two in Hyderabad, New Delhi, Pune and Chennai. Some industry sources told TOI that certain global brands tend to adopt a strong-arm approach with franchise partners, with management changes sometimes introduced without adequate operational support to sustain the partnership.

The development reflects a broader pattern in India, where several global brands have faced friction with local franchise partners. McDonald's is a prominent example. In 2017, the company was locked in a legal dispute with its North and East India franchise partner Connaught Plaza Restaurants, which led to the temporary closure of 169 outlets.

Industry observers say such tensions are not uncommon. Franchise-led expansion in India often brings together global brands that retain control over brand standards and systems, while local partners undertake such outcomes often stem from a misalignment between global brand expectations and on-ground realities in India, including high real estate costs, supply chain challenges and uneven demand across cities. They add that franchise partnerships typically involve significant capital deployment by local operators, making exits or restructuring particularly contentious. Disagreements can arise over brand standards, royalties, expansion pace and operational control, especially when global companies recalibrate their India strategy.

Industry executives say capital-intensive execution. This split in responsibilities can create friction, particularly during exits, when disputes arise over control, support commitments, and financial claims.

In another instance, Future Retail terminated its agreement with 7-Eleven in 2021 after failing to meet expansion targets and franchise fee obligations. The partnership, announced in 2019 to bring the US convenience store chain to India, did not result in a single operational outlet.

FRANCHISE FALLOUT

Operations continue, for now: JSM says cafes will run as usual unless a court orders otherwise.

Contracts terminated: Hard Rock has revoked JSM's rights to operate cafes and Rock Shops across India.

India still strategic market: Hard Rock maintains India remains important; Goa hotel unaffected.

Part of larger pattern? Similar franchise disputes seen with McDonald's (2017) and 7-Eleven (2021), highlighting structural tensions

'API proficiency in ChatGPT fetches ₹30L avg salary in India'

Shilpa.Phadnis
@timesofindia.com

Bengaluru: Developers with API-level expertise in AI tools such as ChatGPT from OpenAI earn an average salary of Rs 30.3 lakh in India, with compensation mostly ranging from Rs 16 lakh to Rs 87.4 lakh across 64 profiles, according to data from US-based salary tracker 6figr.

Those with skills in Gemini from Google earn an average salary of Rs 24.3 lakh, typically ranging from Rs 19.4 lakh to Rs 41.3 lakh, the platform's data shows. Anthropic's Claude appears as an outlier in the dataset. Employees who list Claude as a skill report an average salary of Rs 95 lakh, though the estimate is based on a single profile, making it less representative than the other figures. Globally, employees working at OpenAI earn an average compensation of about $819,800 (Rs 7.5 crore) annually, with salaries ranging from $612,300 (Rs 5.6 crore) to $2.4 million, based on 114 profiles, according to the report exclusively shared with TOI. Core AI and LLM-related skills include Llama, OpenAI API, Gemini and Hugging Face, along with development frameworks and tooling such as LangChain, LangGraph, Langfuse, LLMOps and reranking. Supporting infrastructure skills include vector databases such as Qdrant and graph databases like Neo4j, while commonly used programming languages include Python, C++, JavaScript and TypeScript. AI applications are often deployed and served using tools such as FastAPI and Docker. According to 6figr, the salary data is derived from verified or user-reported profiles rather than public job listings. The platform benchmarks pay using an AI-driven system that analyses real-time data from sources such as offer letters, pay slips and user profiles to compare compensation across companies, roles, locations and skills. "We believe only two types of white-collar jobs will exist in the future: either working full-time for frontier AI labs or training, annotating and labelling data for these labs, earning income through flexible, part-time engagements," said Vinod Chandrashekar, founder of 6Figr.com.

Maruti to drive in seven new SUVs in 5-6 years: CEO

SUV Push To Lift Share, Exports, Capacity Expansion Plans

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi: India's largest carmaker Maruti Suzuki plans to launch seven new SUVs over the next five-six years as it looks to strengthen its position in India's fast-growing sport utility vehicle segment, managing director and CEO Hisashi Takeuchi said Tuesday.

"The share of SUVs within the Indian passenger vehicle market has been growing rapidly. Maruti Suzuki is expanding its product offerings in the SUV segment to secure market share," Takeuchi said during an investor presentation, adding that the company will introduce an entry-level car "unique to Suzuki" for first-time buyers in India.

Maruti has received a draft income tax assessment order of Rs 5,786 crore for 2022-23

A late entrant in the segment, the company has been increasing its SUV presence and has garnered 19.6% of the market so far in 2025-26 (April-Feb), driven by recent launches such as Brezza, Grand Vitara, Fronx and Jimny. Takeuchi added that the company will undertake expansion in the medium and large SUV and MPV portfolio for upgraded customer preference. Maruti Suzuki also plans to scale up production capacity to around four million units annually over time to meet rising domestic demand and strengthen its position as a global export hub. The company exported about 3.3 lakh units in FY24, with expansion in markets like Africa and West Asia, and will start exporting electric vehicles to Europe and Japan.

Separately, in a regulatory filing, the company said that it had received a draft income tax assessment order of Rs 5,786 crore for 2022-23 as additions to its declared income. Maruti Suzuki said it will challenge the order before the Dispute Resolution Panel.

Calling the notice routine, Rahul Bharti, senior executive officer at Maruti Suzuki, said, "Such orders arise from time to time, largely on account of interpretation issues. In the company's assessment, there is no financial impact, and the matter will be handled through the usual process."

Strides buys Sandoz generics to scale Africa

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Bengaluru: Strides Pharma Science will pay an upfront consideration of $12 million to acquire and in-license a portfolio of branded generic medicines from Sandoz, as the Bengaluru-based drugmaker moves to scale up its presence across Sub-Saharan Africa.

The transaction, executed through its step-down subsidiary Strides Pharma International AG, covers key markets including Ghana, Nigeria, Kenya, and a cluster of countries in Western Sahara. The portfolio includes therapies in anti-infectives, cardiovascular and dermatology, with several brands generating more than $1 million in annual sales.

$12 million deal to expand presence, boost scale and strengthen branded portfolio across key African markets

The upfront payment will be made at closing and funded through internal accruals. The company said the deal is expected to be earnings-per-share accretive, supported by profitable branded sales and operating leverage.

As part of the agreement, Strides will fully acquire certain products while in-licensing others, which it will continue to market on behalf of Sandoz. The companies will also enter into a manufacturing and supply arrangement to ensure continuity of production and availability of the medicines.

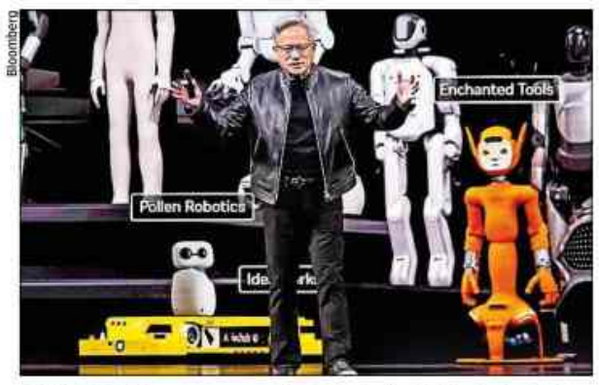
With the addition of the Sandoz portfolio, **Strides Pharma Science expects to more than double its presence in the Sub-Saharan Africa region and emerge among the top five pharmaceutical companies there by sales. In the markets it operates in, the company expects to rank among the top two players.

"This acquisition represents a significant milestone for our 'in Africa for Africa' strategy," said Aditya Kumar, executive director for business development at Strides.

Nvidia sees $1 trillion AI chip opportunity

Jensen Huang Outlines Inference Push, New Chips, Strategy To Counter Rising Competition

San Jose: Nvidia said the revenue opportunity for its artificial intelligence chips may reach at least $1 trillion through 2027, as the company outlined a strategy to compete more aggressively in the fast-growing market for running AI systems in real time.



CHIP WARS: New processors, rivals closing in, Nvidia pivots strategy as AI computing shifts beyond training stage

Chief executive officer Jensen Huang unveiled a new central processor and an AI system built on technology from Groq — a chip startup from which Nvidia licensed technology for $17 billion in Dec — at its annual GTC developer conference in San Jose, California.

The moves are part of Huang's bid to firm up the company's position in so-called inference computing, the process of answering queries, where its graphics processors face greater competition from central processing units and custom processors built by companies such as Google. Nvidia chips have dominated AI model training, which has been the focus in recent years. "The inference inflection has arrived," Huang said. "And demand just keeps on going up."

Dressed in his signature black leather jacket, Huang was speaking at a hockey arena with a capacity of more than 18,000 at the four-day conference, which has become one of the biggest showcases of AI technology. "I just want to remind you, this is a tech conference," he told the audience.

After a rally that made Nvidia the first company to hit a $5 trillion valuation last Oct, doubts have emerged about its growth. Investors have also questioned whether its plan of ploughing back profits into the AI ecosystem will pay off. Huang's comments allayed some of those concerns. The $1 trillion forecast is up from the $500 billion revenue opportunity through 2026 that Nvidia cited for its Blackwell and Rubin AI chips in its last earnings call in Feb.

Shares of Nvidia briefly jumped on the new forecast but pared gains to close up 1.2%. "Huang mapping out a $1 trillion opportunity through 2027 underscores durable demand for Nvidia's AI infrastructure despite investor concerns," Emarketer analyst Jacob Bourne said. "It signals Nvidia is sustaining its leadership in the AI chip market while the overall industry expands beyond early experimentation into large-scale deployment."

Inference boom

Huang said inference, where AI systems answer questions or carry out tasks, will be split into two steps.

Nvidia's Vera Rubin chips will handle a first step called "prefill", where a user's request is transformed from human language into "tokens" used by AI systems.

Groq's chips will handle a second "decode" stage, where the AI system generates responses. After spending hundreds of billions of dollars on training AI models, companies such as OpenAI, Anthropic and Meta are shifting towards serving hundreds of millions of users accessing these systems.

This shift is also driving demand for central processing units — dominated by Intel — which are increasingly seen as an alternative to Nvidia's graphics processors for deploying AI models. "We are selling a lot of CPU standalone," Huang said while unveiling the new Vera CPU.

"This is already for sure going to be a multi-billion-dollar business for us." Huang also outlined the company's Feynman roadmap but offered limited details beyond listing planned AI processors and networking chips. The architecture is expected in 2028, following Rubin Ultra chips. The company is also targeting autonomous AI agents with NemoClaw, which integrates with OpenClaw to add privacy and safety controls to tools that can execute tasks with minimal human guidance and have generated global interest. "It's kind of upleveled the entire discussion. It's upleveled how infrastructure is built," said Technalysis Research president Bob O'Donnell. "He used to come out with a new GPU chip and say, look, here's my new chip. Now he has multiple systems that make up these platforms." REUTERS

Emergence AI to recruit 500 researchers at new India AI lab

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Bengaluru: Emergence AI, the New York-based frontier agentic AI company founded by three Indian-American scientists from IBM Research, has launched Emergence India Labs (EIL) to develop autonomous AI agents.

The lab aims to accelerate the creation of next-generation autonomous systems capable of operating mission-critical digital and physical infrastructure, positioning India to move beyond its traditional IT services model toward advanced manufacturing, logistics and industrial automation.

EIL is expected to scale to 500 research scientists and engineers over the next three to four years.

Located near the Indian Institute of Science (IIsc) in Bengaluru, the lab will collaborate closely with the IISc ecosystem through joint research programmes, academic exchanges, hackathons and summer schools to build a next-generation talent pipeline in autonomous systems. Siddhartha Gadgil of IISc will join as chief scientist while retaining his academic affiliation.

The lab will be led by internationally recognised scientists including Prasenjit Dey (PhD, EPFL; IIT Delhi), who will lead operations in India, Ravi Kokku (PhD, UT Austin; IIT Kharagpur), and professor Gadgil (PhD, Caltech; Indian Statistical Institute).

Cadence appoint Alok Jain as India MD

Bengaluru: Cadence has appointed **Alok Jain** as MD for the India region. In this role, Jain will spearhead the company's strategic growth in the region. "Alok's deep technical expertise, coupled with his decades of leadership at Cadence, makes him the ideal leader to drive our India operations," said Anirudh Devgan, president and CEO of Cadence.

Jain brings over 35 years of industry experience. He joined Cadence India in 1997 and currently serves as vice-president in the System Verification Group (SDA). TNN

Unlike many multinational R&D centres that operate as satellite extensions of overseas headquarters, Emergence India Labs is conceived as a core, AI-native R&D hub in India, aimed at anchoring sovereign AI capabilities.

"We believe the most immediate opportunity lies in building autonomous AI systems capable of operating the world's most mission-critical digital infrastructure—from financial networks and telecom platforms to cloud and digital public systems," said Satya Nitta, co-founder and CEO of Emergence.

"For more than two decades, India's technology sector has been anchored in IT services," Nitta added. "The next chapter must be defined by building frontier autonomous systems that power critical infrastructure. The hardest problem in robotics isn't movement—it's thinking. By focusing on agentic systems, we are solving reasoning under uncertainty. Around the world, leading economies are embedding AI into physical systems at scale. India must participate fully in shaping that transformation."

Professor Gadgil said India has the potential to lead this emerging frontier. "Driven by a rich scientific tradition and a dynamic generation of engineers and entrepreneurs, India can play a defining role. By anchoring the entire spectrum of innovation here in Bengaluru—from foundational research to real-world applications—we aim to catalyse an ecosystem of sustained, world-class breakthroughs and help architect the future of intelligent systems."

Check your credit score before seeking a bank job

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi: Make sure that you have a good credit score, if you are an aspirant for a job in a bank.

Govt on Tuesday told Parliament that banks are increasingly looking at the credit score "to encourage responsible credit behaviour among employees who are entrusted with public funds". In fact, responding to a question in the Rajya Sabha, minister of state for finance Pankaj Chaudhary said over last three years, the appointment of 20 candidates were cancelled or offers were withdrawn due to poor credit history. He, however, said that the number is only 0.02% of the candidates selected through the Institute of Banking Personnel Selection (IBPS), which is the testing agency.

"Candidates applying for the common recruitment process conducted by IBPS are required to ensure that they maintain a healthy credit history at the time of joining the participating banks and the minimum credit score as per the policy of participating banks, amended from time to time. However, this is not a pre-condition to apply and not applicable to candidates with no bank account/credit history" the minister said. The final say on the issue is with the allotted bank and Chaudhury did not mention any cut-off score. In recent years, with banks not connected digitally and credit bureaus coming up, every borrower, including those with credit cards, have a credit score, which changes based not only on repayment of dues but also depends on timely payment.

Not Making The Cut

How many candidates were rejected due to low credit score

Bank	Number of candidates
SBI	11
PNB	4
Bank of Baroda	2
Central Bank	2
Union Bank	1

Source: Parliament question

Given that banks are custodian of public funds, lenders are keen to ensure good credit culture among employees, including those who are joining them as trainees, said a banker. For a long time, there has been discussion on also including utilities to evaluate the overall credit score.

'Digital economy to account for 20% of GDP by 2030'

New Delhi: India's digital economy is projected to account for nearly 20% of the country's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) by 2030, driven by a growth rate that is double that of the broader economy, a senior govt official said on Tuesday.

Speaking at the Nasscom Global Confluence 2026, Ministry of Electronics and IT (MeitY) secretary S Krishnan said the digital economy-encompassing the information technology, IT-enabled services, and the electronics sector-currently contributes about 13% to India's GDP. This upward trajectory, he noted, will be further accelerated by the increased adoption of Artificial Intelligence (AI) across sectors. "Currently at about 13% of India's GDP, we are going twice as fast as the rest of the economy. We'll end up being almost about 20% of India's GDP by 2030," Krishnan said. AGENCIES

NCLT nod clears way for Adani to complete JAL projects

▶ Continued from page 1

In Feb, Vedanta had asked NCLT to review its decision to approve AEL's Rs 15,000-crore resolution plan for JAL. This plea has been dismissed now.

The NCLT approval paves the way for Adani to complete JAL's incomplete projects. Vedanta can challenge the order in the National Company Law Appellate Tribunal. The flagship company of Jaypee Group, JAL owes lenders about Rs 55,000 crore. It entered insolvency proceedings in June 2024, years after RBI and govt identified it as a problem child for the banking sector.

JAL has 12 stalled residential projects along the Yamuna Expressway. About two decades back, YEIDA had allotted about 1,000 hectares of land to Jaypee International Sports to build a sports city, which includes the Formula 1 track where two races were hosted in India. The Adani group has stated its intent to get the race back to India.

JAL's major real estate projects are Jaypee Greens in Greater Noida, a part of Jaypee Greens Wishtown in Noida, and the Jaypee International Sports City, strategically located near the upcoming Jewar International Airport. It also has three commercial/industrial office spaces in Delhi-NCR, while its hotel division has five properties in Delhi-NCR, Mussoorie, and Agra. The stalled residential projects include names like Country Homes 1 & 2, Krowns, Greencrest Homes, Bougainvilleas, Villa Expanza, Sportsville, Kassia, Kove, and Buddh Circuit Studios.

Karnataka Institute of Endocrinology & Research, Bengaluru
(An Autonomous Regd. Institute of Govt. of Karnataka)
Old Madras Road, Indiranagar, Bengaluru -560038
Ph: +91-80-25283013, +91-80-24492900
Website: www.kierbengaluru.karnataka.gov.in

No.:KIER/Admin/07/2025-26 Date: 17.03.2026

RECRUITMENT NOTIFICATION

Applications are invited from the eligible candidates for the different category of 32 posts in Karnataka Institute of Endocrinology and Research, Indiranagar, Bengaluru temporarily **on contractual basis**. The Application form and other details are detailed in the institute website: **www.kierbengaluru.karnataka.gov.in**

Application fee of Rs.500/- (Rupees Five Hundred only) (non refundable) in the form of DD should be obtained in favour of **"The Director, KIER, Bengaluru**. Last date for submission of application to the Institute is **on or before 08.04.2026 before 04.30 pm.**

Sd/-
Chief Administrative Officer (I/c),
KIER, Bengaluru.

DIPR/CP/JA/6318/2025-26

ಕರ್ನಾಟಕ ಸರ್ಕಾರ
ಜಿಲ್ಲಾ ಪಂಚಾಯತ್, ಬೆಳಗಾವಿ
ಜಿಲ್ಲಾ ಆರೋಗ್ಯ ಮತ್ತು ಕುಟುಂಬ ಕಲ್ಯಾಣ ಇಲಾಖೆ, ಬೆಳಗಾವಿ
ದೂರವಾಣಿ: (0831) 2407241 ಫ್ಯಾಕ್ಸ್: (0831) 2407242
E-mail: dhubelgaum@gmail.com

SL/ E-TENDER/30/35/2025-26 Date: 17-03-2026

TENDER PUBLICATION

Bid in the E-procurement portal (platform) is invited to supply For **Pharmacist, Lab Technician, DEO, Group-D and Sweeper Guard staff for All PHC/CHC/Genesis Hospital Belagavi** for the year 2025-26. order to **01/04/2025**. Total tender approximate value is **Rs. 249,95,396.12/-** for one year, The details of tender as mentioned below.

DETAILS OF TENDER:- Tender No:DHFWS/2025-26/IND____Group Pharmacist, Lab Technician ,DEO, Group-D and Sweeper Guard staff E M D Amount Rs.499907.00/- Commencement of downloading of e-tender forms from website http://eproc.karnataka.gov.in Date: 22/12/2024 Last date for seeking clarification and purchasing tender form Date : 23/03/2026 up to 16:00:00. Last date for uploading of tender in e-procurement platform. Date: 24/03/2026 upto 16:00:00. Date & Time for opening of Tenders Date: 25/03/2026 at 12:30 at District Health And Family Welfare offic Belagavi.

Those registered for tender in E-Procurement portal should pay tender processing fee, E M D amount, processing dates & other details available in Government of Karnataka E-Procurement portal website http://eproc.karnataka.gov.in or you can contact to undersigned officers in during office hours.

Sd/-
District Health And Family Welfare office
Belagavi

DIPR/BELAGAVI/2025/2025-26/DHFWS/PANDEP/ELIGIBILITY

Government of Karnataka
Office of the Executive Engineer, Minor Irrigation And Ground Water Development Division, Ballari

IFT No. EE/MI & GWDD/Bly/AE-1/2025-26/2355
Date :13.03.2026.

TENDER NOTIFICATION (KW-4)

On behalf of Hon'ble Governor of Karnataka the Executive Engineer, Minor Irrigation and Ground Water Development Division Ballari invited the tender for the work of under **Head of Account 4702 Plan-MOT** works in Ballari Dist Sandur Taluk 01 Works in **Two Cover System Estimated amount put to tender is Rs.106.34 lakhs** the tenderers should download and submitt the tenders from **date : 16.03.2026 to 07.04.2026 upto 17.30 hours. Date & Time of opening Technical Bid is on 09.04.2026 at 11.00 hours. Opening of Financial Bid is on 13.04.2026 at 11.00 hours**. Any other information should get by login the website "KPPP" website https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in

Sd/- Executive Engineer,
M.I. & G.W.D. Division, Ballari.

DIPR/Ballari/1150/KSMCA/2025-26

KARNATAKA NEERAVARI NIGAM LIMITED
(A Government of Karnataka Enterprise)
Office of the Executive Engineer, KNNL, SLIS, Division No. 1, Mundargi, Gadag Dist. Ph No. 08371-295016,
e-mail: eeslis1mdg@gmail.com

TENDER NOTIFICATION
(ONLY THROUGH "KPP-Procurement" SYSTEM)

Reference : 1. This office Tender Notification No: 1554/2025-26 Dated: 13.03.2026
2. This office Tender Notification No: 1553/2025-26 Dated: 13.03.2026

Tenders in Electronic mode are invited on behalf of the Managing Director, KNNL, Bengaluru, by the Executive Engineer, KNNL, SLIS Division No.1 Mundargi Gadag District from the eligible Tenderers who are fulfilled the terms and conditions mentioned as in Tender Notifications cited at reference (1) & (2) above. The tender having Indent No. 4089 & 4202 respectively in KPP-Portal and The amount put to tender the work is Rs. **50.00** Lakh & Rs. **183.45** Lakh, accordingly EMD amount is Rs. 1.00 Lakh & Rs. 2.33 Lakh respectively

Therefore, The bidders can access this tender in https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in website from **16.03.2026** and the last date of submission for the tender is **06.04.2026** and date of opening of Technical Bid **08.04.2026**. A Pre-bid meeting for Indent No.4202 is held on **24.03.2026** at 11:45 AM in at Office of Executive Engineer, KNNL SLIS Division No.01 Mundargi.

Further bidders are hereby by instructed to contact or visit the below mentioned office in working hours regarding Terms and Conditions of the tender and for furthermore information please contact KPP-Procurement Helpdesk Phone Numbers: 080-46010000, 080-68948777, 09240214000 & 09240214001. Conditional tenders are liable to be rejected. The officer competent to accept the tender shall have the right to reject any or all the tenders without assigning any reason whatsoever. Sd/- Executive Engineer,
KNNL, SLIS, Division No-1, Mundargi

DIPR/Gadag/KSMCA/713/2025-26

MSIL Mysore Sales International Limited
(A Govt. of Karnataka Enterprise)
Chit Fund Division
MSIL House, No. 36, Cunningham Road, Bangalore - 560 052.
Phone No.: 080-22264021-25, e-mail: msilchits@msilonline.com
No.: MSIL/CF/003/2025-26 Date : 17.03.2026

e-AUCTION NOTIFICATION

(e-Auction Notification, Eligibility Criteria and Terms and Conditions)
e-Auction for Investment of Surplus Funds through e-portal of Government of Karnataka https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in

MSIL, a Government of Karnataka Undertaking invites competitive Bids through e-procurement portal for placing surplus funds in the form of Fixed Deposits.

Schedule of various events for e-auction:

(1) Date of e-Auction Notification: **17.03.2026. (2)** Pre-Bid Meeting: **24.03.2026 at 3.30 p.m. (3)** Last date to upload the Eligibility Criteria in Annexure-A & Declaration in Annexure-B in the e-Portal: **25.03.2026 at 3.30 p.m. (4)** Live Bidding: **26.03.2026 at 2.30 p.m. (5)** date of investment: **27.03.2026 to 30.03.2026**

Sd/- Chief General Manager (Chit Fund Division)

4001/75/2526
idco Your partner in growth ISO 9001 & 14001 Corporation | ODISHA NEW OPPORTUNITIES

OFFICE OF THE CHIEF GENERAL MANAGER (P&C), IDCO, IDCO TOWERS, JANPATH BHUBANESWAR - 751022

Tender Call Notice No. IDCO/H.O./P&C/EST/E-3048/01/2026- 6903 Dated: 10.03.2026

NOTICE INVITING TENDER UNDER NATIONAL COMPETITIVE BIDDING THROUGH e-PROCUREMENT

1. **Name of the work** : Construction of dedicated RCC Cable Trench along the SEZ road (back side of the Infosys building) to EMC Park Main Gate.
2. **Estimated cost** : Rs. 395.80 lakhs (Approx.)
3. **Period of completion** : 06 (Six) Calendar months.
4. **Other details** :

Procurement Officer	Bid ID/ Tender reference No.	Availability of Tender on-line for Bidding	
1	2	3	4
Chief General Manager (P&C), IDCO, IDCO Towers, Bhubaneswar.	Bid ID/Tender Reference No. P&C/EST/E -44/2025-26.	20.03.2026 at 16.00 Hrs.	02.04.2026 upto 17.00 Hrs.

Further details can be seen from the e-Procurement Portal, **www.tendersodisha.gov.in** and Corrigendum if any will not be published in newspapers and can only be seen in the e-Procurement portal **www.tendersodisha.gov.in** and **www.idco.in**

Sd/-
Chief General Manager (P&C)
IDCO, Bhubaneswar
OIPR - 4001/4075/1/25-26/0024

12001/52/2526

THE ODISHA STATE POLICE HOUSING & WELFARE CORPORATION LTD.
(A Government of Odisha Undertaking)
JANAPATH, BHOINAGAR, BHUBANESWAR - 22
Ph: 0674-2541545, 2542921
E-mail: ophwc.od@od.nic.in, Website: www.ophwc.com
e-procurement notice No.- 30/OPHWC/2025-26
INVITATION FOR BIDS (IFB)

The **Chief Engineer (OSPH&WC)**, Odisha, Bhubaneswar invites Percentage rate bid in Double Cover system in **ONLINE MODE** only, for the works as detailed below:

1.	Nature of work	**Building works**
2.	No. of Works	**05 Nos.**
3.	Value of Tender	**Rs.1.63 Cr. to Rs.16.5 Cr.**
4.	Class of Contractor	**'B' Class to 'Special' Class**
5.	Cost of Bid document (To be paid online)	**Rs.11,800.00**
6.	Availability of Bid Documents in the website	**Dt. 20/03/2026 to Dt. 04/04/2026 up to 5.00 P.M.**
7.	Last date/time of Receipt of Bids in the Portal	**Dt. 04/04/2026 up to 5.00 P.M.**
8.	Date of Opening Bid	**Dt. 06/04/2026 at 10.30 A.M.**
9.	Date of Technical Presentation (among qualified bidders only)	**Date & Time will be notified after opening of the Technical Bid.**
10.	* The Bidders have to participate in **ONLINE** bidding only. Further details can also be seen from the website: **https://tendersodisha.gov.in.** Any addendum/corrigendum/cancellation of tender shall not be published in Newspaper and can to only be seen in the said website. * The Authority reserves the right to reject any or all bids and terminate the tender process without assigning any reason thereof.	

Sd/- Chief Engineer (OSPH&WC)

N.B. The quoted rate should be all inclusive but excluding G.S.T. as applicable Under works contract.

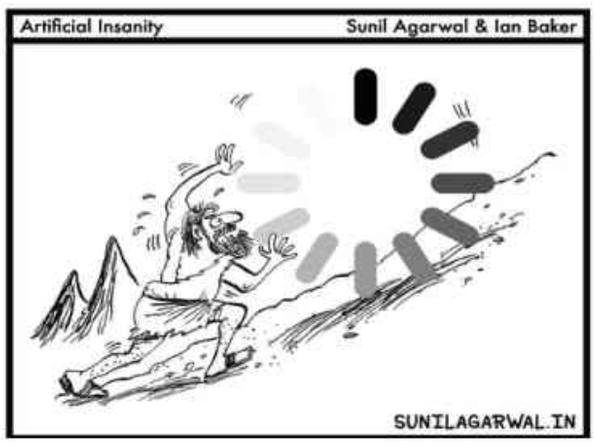
OIPR-12001/12025/1/25-26/0008

TECH **I'D LIKE** TO SEE

INTELLIGENCE INFRASTRUCTURE FOR HUMAN POTENTIAL

India's a young, ambitious nation with a deep reservoir of untapped talent. What we lack is a system that can map, guide, and grow that talent with the same intelligence we apply to machines, but with ethics, trust, and purpose at its core. The technology I envision is a nationwide intelligence infrastructure, an AI-powered digital twin for every Indian. Built on advanced AI, blockchain for identity security, and big data analytics for market insights, this secure, ethical, and sovereign twin would understand a person's skills, aspirations, learning agility, behavioural traits, and growth pathways. It would guide individuals to meaningful careers, recommend real-time upskilling, predict job-market shifts with machine learning, and connect people to high-value, future-ready opportunities they never knew existed. The economic impact would be transformative. For society, it would bridge inequity, democratise access to opportunity, and ensure that talent from any location, background, or gender stands on equal footing.

Kapil Joshi | CEO - IT STAFFING, QUESS CORP



How to make your GCC the company's 2nd HQ

Sujit.John@timesofindia.com

At the Nasscom Technology & Leadership Forum (NTLF) last month, we organised a panel discussion titled 'India GCCs as the second headquarters of global enterprises'. The first time many of us heard the term 'second headquarters' in the context of global enterprises was in 2007, when then CEO of Cisco, John Chambers, sent his senior-most executive, Wim Elfrink, to Bengaluru to establish what the company called its 'second headquarters'. About four years later, when Elfrink was preparing to return to the US, he told us the plan had been accomplished. From a handful of people, Cisco in India had grown to over 6,000. A strong R&D base had begun innovating for the world. Business leaders here were helping implement projects across Asia. Elfrink's target was to ensure that a fifth of Cisco's senior executives would be based in Bengaluru, and he indicated that too had been achieved.

Today, there are a number of GCCs in India that could claim to be their parents' second HQ, with core business and AI decisions being shaped from these centres. SAP's largest R&D hub outside Germany is in India, with over 17,000 employees, and SAP Labs India MD Sindhu Gangadharan said a quarter of the company's patents come out of India. That's an indication, she said, of how much of product leadership is today driven by the centre here.

Sachin Kulkarni, president of Fiserv Global Services, said that in just the past six years, the financial technology company had increased the number of product owners in the India GCC from a handful, to about 100 – people who are today defining the target addressable market, analysing competitive intelligence, deciding go-to-market strategy, pricing strategy, and understanding newer spaces to enter. He noted that his predecessor is now the global CIO for Fiserv, and his erstwhile COO is one of the division CIOs. "This CXO pipeline of leadership coming out of India is a litmus test of whether we are second headquarters or not," he said.

Such is the confidence now in India, that some newer GCCs are pulling out all the stops. The 147-year-old oil & gas giant Chevron launched its GCC in Bengaluru just 15 months ago. Akshay Sahni, country head at Chevron India, said the centre – named ENGINE (Engineering and Innovation Excellence Centre) – represents Chevron's largest investment by far in technology capacity and capability building outside North America. We had an opportunity to see the centre earlier, and we discussed it at NTLF. The investment has gone into a stunning office setup with things like large 3D digital-twin screening rooms that employees can walk into to understand exactly how an oil rig in the middle of an ocean looks, feels and works. It's gone into talent that's integrating sensors into drones and robotic dogs, and building the software to collect, stream and analyse the data from these sensors. These systems can do things like high-end thermal imaging and vibration analysis to enable preventive maintenance.

"The work we do at ENGINE is really meaningful, impactful and cutting-edge," Sahni said, noting that it's all directed towards providing the world affordable, reliable and ever cleaner energy.

So, what are the lessons in this for GCCs that are looking to quickly become their enterprise's second HQ?

India's big advantage, Kulkarni noted, is that our talent possesses general intellectual curiosity, analytical rigour, and an attitude of embracing tech tools – including now AI tools – as opposed to getting overwhelmed by them. While companies will still need to help them upskill, everyone underscored the importance of GCCs rapidly building domain expertise. Chevron does that with its digital-twin rooms, and flying in their topmost leaders and subject matter experts. Gangadharan said domain expertise and entrepreneurial energy is particularly critical now when you are trying to build AI solutions – because AI has to be applied in the context of a business process.

Kulkarni said that with all the concerns around AI ethics and governance, it is also becoming critical for GCCs to invest in skills around social sciences. "If we don't have enough legal and ethics expertise sitting in our GCCs, we will never be able to bring that end-to-end product development from our headquarters into GCCs," he said.

RAPID RISE IN PRODUCT OWNERSHIP & LEADERSHIP ROLES

"The switch that has happened in GCCs over the past few years is towards product ownership, product leadership, and the decision-making aspect. Big parts of the portfolio are being designed, developed, deployed and operated out of India. In SAP, 40% of our global R&D is happening out of India. But more than that, what I want you to take away is, a quarter of the patents that come out of SAP globally come out of India. And that is what I mean by product ownership.

Sindhu Gangadharan | CHAIRPERSON, NASSCOM, AND MD, SAP LABS INDIA

"In 2020, we had a handful of product owner roles. Today, we have about 100 of these roles. They are now at a point where they're defining the target addressable market, competitive intelligence, go-to-market strategy, pricing strategy, pricing discovery, understanding where the white spaces are, and where we need to differentiate. It's very, very upstream as opposed to product feature development or product roadmap development.

Sachin Kulkarni | PRESIDENT, FISERV GLOBAL SERVICES

"GCCs are in a unique position to help scale AI solutions. Before Chevron ENGINE (Engineering & Innovation Excellence Centre in Bengaluru) was established, we were very decentralised, spread all over the world. ENGINE has been a great enabler of centralisation. And with centralisation comes standardisation. And once you standardise on technology solutions, you can deploy them at pace, increase accuracy, and share lessons learned across various deployments.

Akshay Sahni | COUNTRY HEAD, CHEVRON INDIA

What new GCCs should do to quickly become strategic to parent companies

"Have a strong focus on innovation, ensure customer centricity, give your people the possibility to come out with thought leadership pieces, both internally and externally. And finally, give your people purpose – what can you do with all the power of technology to give back to society! All of these pillars are equally important for us, and if we double down on all of them, I think we can become a best-in-class GCC. **—Sindhu Gangadharan**

"One, build commercial acumen, not just delivery leadership. Follow the money – you need to ultimately be able to understand how you're delighting your clients, how the client makes money, how clients' clients are making money, and how you as an enterprise are making money.
Two, ensure client centricity. Gone are the days where the clients talk to the business at the headquarters, who then talk to the tech at the headquarters, who then talk with three levels of loss of translation to the GCC. Now we have platform owners and SMEs either directly at user conferences or talking to the prospects or doing client solutions or co-creating with the clients. **—Sachin Kulkarni**

"One, you need to build trust and credibility with your parent organisation. That will enable you to do many things in the future. And trust and credibility comes when you deliver quality work early on. Two, have a very strong employee value proposition. We hire a lot of experienced people from different parts of the ecosystem. We also have college hires. And for us, strong employee value proposition means giving them meaningful work, impactful work, making sure they feel part of the business, understand the business context. **—Akshay Sahni**

Enter the machine workforce — and a new identity problem

"We're moving from a human workforce to a hybrid workforce that includes humans and agents working together. As those agents start doing autonomous work inside companies, it becomes hugely important that they are properly authenticated and authorised. If organisations want to take advantage of AI safely, they have to secure identity first.
– Eric Kelleher | PRESIDENT & COO, OKTA

"We're entering a world where machine identities outnumber human identities. Containers, APIs and AI agents operate continuously at machine speed, which means security can no longer rely on static controls. Identity decisions have to become automated, dynamic and context-aware. Enterprises must govern these identities carefully, giving them only the access required for specific tasks.
– Vijay Rajagopal | COUNTRY HEAD, BFSI & FINTECH GO-TO-MARKET, AWS INDIA

"AI agents are becoming part of the enterprise workforce, but they can also become the highest-risk insiders if they are not governed properly. Organisations must treat machine identities with the same seriousness as human identities. In the agentic era, trust will not scale through people alone—it will scale through strong identity policies and governance. – Ravindra Usmanpurkar, Partner
– Ravindra Usmanpurkar | PARTNER – CYBER, DIGITAL TRUST & PRIVACY, DELOITTE INDIA

Akhil George & Sujit John | TNN

As artificial intelligence agents begin to take on more work inside companies, the foundations of digital security are undergoing dramatic shifts. For decades, authentication was largely a one-time event — enter a password, log in, and gain access to your work station. In the emerging agent-driven economy, that model is rapidly becoming obsolete.

Security leaders say enterprises are moving toward what they call "context-aware trust", where identity decisions must be evaluated continuously rather than at a single login moment. The change is being driven by a dramatic rise in non-human identities — AI agents, automated scripts, APIs and cloud workloads — that now outnumber human users across modern technology systems.

"The network used to be the perimeter," said Eric Kelleher, president & chief operating officer at Okta, during a webinar we held recently. "Employees were inside the office, using corporate devices on corporate networks. But with mobile, cloud and remote work, the network is no longer the boundary. Identity has become the new perimeter."

In practical terms, that means every action inside a system — whether triggered by a person or an AI agent — must be verified continuously. Static security controls such as firewalls remain necessary, Kelleher said, but they are no longer sufficient in an environment where users connect from multiple devices and automated software performs tasks across systems.

The urgency of the shift is reflected in the scale of cyber threats. According to estimates cited by Kelleher, more than 80% of successful cyber-attacks begin with some form of compromised identity. Once attackers gain valid credentials, they can move through systems undetected.

"Identity is the only thing attackers consistently target and the only thing enterprises can consistently control," said Ravindra Usmanpurkar, partner, cyber - digital trust & privacy at Deloitte India. "If the identity layer is weak, it doesn't matter how many firewalls you buy. It's like leaving the keys under the doormat."

The agentic problem

The rise of AI agents is complicating this landscape. Modern enterprises increasingly rely on automated systems to handle tasks ranging from customer service interactions to data analysis and software deployment. Each of these agents interacts with applications, accesses data and performs actions on behalf of humans.

In many organisations, machine identities — such as containers, serverless functions, scripts and automated services — already outnumber human accounts.

"We are already seeing machine identities outnumber human identities," said Vijay Rajagopal, country head, BFSI & Fintech Go-To-Market at Amazon Web Services (AWS). "Unlike humans, these identities operate continuously and at machine speed. That means security also has to be automated and dynamic."

The problem is that governance frameworks were largely designed for human users. AI agents, which can create and access resources automatically, often fall outside those traditional controls.

Okta's research highlights the growing gap between adoption and security. A survey of enterprise technology leaders by Okta found that 91% of organisations already have AI agents operating in production systems. Yet only around 10% say they are confident those agents are properly secured.

The disparity reflects the pace at which AI tools are spreading through organisations. Employees experimenting with productivity tools or automation platforms can deploy agents without central oversight, creating hidden identities inside corporate systems.

"One of the biggest challenges security teams face is that they often don't know which agents exist in their environment," Kelleher said. "Employees are experimenting with these tools to get work done, and those agents can be deployed globally across the organisation."

To address this blind spot, companies are increasingly adopting technologies designed to discover and map all identities within their systems, including non-human ones. One emerging category is identity security posture management, which scans enterprise environments to identify active agents and automated service accounts.

Usmanpurkar believes organisations must start thinking of AI agents not as technical tools but as a new category of digital workforce.

"AI agents are becoming the fastest employees in the organisation," he said. "But they can also become the highest-risk insiders if they are not governed properly."

TIMES TECHIES WEBINARS
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okta
The World's Identity Company

I grew a 40-member team to over 1,000 IN 8 YEARS

Rajul Sood

When I look back, my journey feels like several different chapters stitched together by curiosity, hard work, and the belief that change is always an opportunity.

It began at Delhi University, where I pursued my graduation, followed by a Master's in finance and control at Punjab University, Chandigarh. Years later, I was privileged to attend the Leadership Program for Women at Harvard University, a milestone that not only expanded my global perspective but also reinforced my commitment to leadership rooted in integrity and adaptability.

CAREER LADDER FOR WOMEN

I volunteered to set up a biz unit | One of the most defining moments in my career was when I volunteered to set up a new business vertical – lending services. It wasn't just about building a team; it was about earning trust, creating governance frameworks, and developing future leaders. The early days were tough, and I questioned myself. But I chose to rise, learn, and start again. What began as a 40-member team grew to over 1,000 in eight years, and today I lead a team of 3,000.

Ability to adapt is critical | What has kept me rooted at the intersection of banking and technology is the sheer power of transformation, how technology has redefined banking, and how offshore partners like us have played a pivotal role in solving complex global challenges. Navigating this shift meant constantly upskilling and helping teams see technology as a strategic enabler rather than a threat. This ability to adapt has been central to my growth. My mantra has always been simple: hard work, integrity, and adaptability. Change is inevitable and embracing it makes you stronger.

I've built an infra for work-life balance | When I started, women made up just 10% of the team. Today, we're at 37%, and I'm proud to have contributed to that change. Believing in the "art of possible" keeps me agile and open to growth. Balancing work and life, especially while leading global teams, has meant building an infrastructure around me – micro-breaks with family, celebrating festivals with colleagues, and creating shared memories that keep me grounded.

I want to be remembered for encouraging women to lead with confidence, for proving that change is not disruption but transformation, and for showing that imagination, empathy, and bold thinking can move industries forward. To every woman in technology, I advise raising your hand for challenging opportunities, and remember that your unique perspective isn't just valuable, it's essential for our industry's future.

Rajul Sood is managing director and head of banking at Acuity Knowledge Partners

Balancing work and life, especially while leading global teams, has meant building an infrastructure around me – micro-breaks with family, celebrating festivals with colleagues, and creating shared memories that keep me grounded.

WORK, WORKER, WORKPLACE
Change all for real AI gains

Akhil George & Sujit John | TNN

The scramble to adopt artificial intelligence across businesses has become impossible to ignore. New tools are being deployed, employees are being trained, and leaders are under pressure to show results. Yet for many organisations, the impact remains underwhelming, especially when you consider the promise of AI.

The problem, said industry leaders during a Times Techies Talks session as part of Publicis Sapient's 'AI that's built to deliver' series, is that most companies are trying to make people faster rather than rethink how work itself is done.

"If you only train people in AI, you're just creating a faster caterpillar. To become a butterfly, you have to change the work, the workplace, and the worker together," said Shefali Sharma Garg, chief talent officer – India at Publicis Sapient.

It is a simple analogy. AI is not just another software upgrade. It changes how tasks are carried out, how teams are structured, and how decisions are made. Training employees without redesigning the system around them often leads to limited gains.

TIMES TECHIES TALKS
Session partner
publicis sapient

Publicis Sapient recognised this early. Instead of focusing only on upskilling, it approached AI as a full organisational transformation. "AI doesn't just affect people," Garg said. "It changes the nature of work itself and the environment in which that work happens. You have to address all three at the same time."

To do that, the company created a dedicated transformation team to rethink everything from career paths to learning models. Traditional training, Garg argues, is no longer enough. "Learning is not about sending people courses anymore. It's about continuously building capability for the future," she said. "And it starts with mindset."

That mindset shift is often the hardest part. Many organisations are still trying to fit AI into old, step-by-step processes. But AI works differently. It can run multiple tasks at once, speeding up entire workflows.

Garg pointed to a project where a team of 50 people was replaced by a much smaller group working alongside AI tools. "We delivered faster and more efficiently," she said. "But the real change was in how we worked. AI lets you do things simultaneously, not step by step."

Finding that balance

For large enterprises, however, redesigning work is not straightforward. Anurag Vohra, global head of core trading solutions and head of C&I India at NatWest Group, said organisations must rethink how decisions are made and who is accountable for them.

"AI can do a lot of the heavy lifting, but humans still need to apply judgment and take responsibility for outcomes," he said. "The shift is from people doing the work to people guiding and validating it."

This requires a deeper structural change. Many companies are still built around layers of approval and sequential workflows, which slow down the benefits AI can deliver. "Our structures were not designed for this kind of speed and interaction," Vohra said. "To really benefit, organisations have to rethink those structures, not just add AI into them."

In industrial settings, the shift is less about uniform adoption and more about where AI can meaningfully augment work.

"In heavy industry, a lot of work is still physical and safety-driven," said Neha Agarwal, head – HR digital CoE and transformation at ArcelorMittal Global Business & Technologies. "AI adoption is much stronger in corporate functions than on the shop floor."

Even there, however, the nature of work is changing. Routine, repetitive tasks are increasingly automated, while human roles are shifting towards judgment and decision-making. AI is also speeding up decision-making by reducing layers of analysis. "Earlier, you might have had multiple layers reviewing data," she explained. "Now AI can compress that process, so teams can act faster."

Scan to watch complete discussion

"If organisations treat AI as just another training programme, they will only move faster within the same limits. Real transformation happens when you redesign the work itself, the environment it happens in, and how people think about it. That is the difference between marginal gains and a fundamental shift in how value is created.
— Shefali Sharma Garg | CHIEF TALENT OFFICER – INDIA, PUBLICIS SAPIENT

"AI is not just about automation; it is about shifting where judgment sits. Machines can analyse and execute at scale, but humans must validate, contextualise, and take accountability. The real challenge is not technology but redesigning organisations to build trust in these systems while ensuring outcomes remain reliable, especially in complex and regulated environments like banking.
— Anurag Vohra | GLOBAL HEAD, CORE TRADING SOLUTIONS & HEAD OF C&I INDIA, NATWEST GROUP

"The biggest shift we are seeing is from doing work to making decisions. AI can generate data and insights faster than ever, but people must interpret and act on them responsibly. Organisations that succeed will be those that rethink roles, reduce layers, and empower teams to act quickly, while ensuring human judgment remains central to critical decisions and outcomes.
— Neha Agarwal | HEAD – HR DIGITAL COE AND TRANSFORMATION, ARCELORMITTAL GLOBAL BUSINESS & TECHNOLOGIES

CONTAINERS

CTRL+F(IND)

Containers are lightweight, portable packages that bundle your application with all its dependencies – libraries, tools, and settings. Think of them as a sealed box containing everything needed to run your software, ensuring it works identically on any computer, whether your laptop, a colleague's machine, or a cloud server. Unlike virtual machines, containers share the host system's operating system, making them faster and more efficient. Docker is the most popular containerisation platform. Containers simplify deployment, reduce compatibility headaches, and allow developers and operations teams to collaborate seamlessly. They're essential in modern software development.

TIMES GLOBAL

THE TIMES OF INDIA, BENGALURU | WEDNESDAY, MARCH 18, 2026

I CANNOT AFFORD TO WASTE MY TIME MAKING MONEY — LOUIS AGASSIZ

ADRIAN GRENIER, WHO HAS MOVED TO HIS TEXAS FARM, SAYS HE'S OPEN TO ACTING AGAIN PROVIDED 'I STAY CLOSE TO HOME'

SONGWRITER DIANE WARREN RECORDED HER 17TH OSCAR NOMINATION WITHOUT A WIN, THE HIGHEST IN HISTORY

Ali Larijani: A Kant scholar who became Iran's wartime leader

His Killing Could Allow Military To Tighten Grip

AFP

Firefighters work at the site of an Israeli air strike in Beirut on Tuesday

Ali Larijani, Iran's top national security official and de facto leader, is the latest senior Iranian figure to be targeted since the start of the US-Israeli war with Iran on Feb 28. Larijani, 67, has in effect been running the country behind the scenes. Since Feb 28, when Iran's supreme leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, and a number of other senior officials, were killed in US-Israeli strikes, Larijani emerged as a defiant public voice of the Iranian govt, regularly condemning the US and Israel on social media.

A trusted confidant of Ayatollah Khamenei, Larijani was among a group of officials whom the supreme leader tasked with devising a plan to ensure the Islamic Republic would survive if he were assassinated, according to senior Iranian officials and members of the royal guards.

Born in Najaf, Iraq in 1957 to a prominent Shia cleric who was close to the Islamic Republic's founder Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini, Larijani's family has been influential within Iran's political system for decades. Many media outlets have compared his gamily to the Kennedys in the US. One of his brother, Sadeq, served as the head of Iran's judiciary, while another, Mohammad Javad, was a senior diplomat who closely advised the late Khamenei on foreign affairs. Larijani has been a conservative force within Iran's theocracy, issuing increasingly hard-line threats throughout the years. In the 1990s, he served as Iran's culture minister, tightening censorship. He served as parliament speaker from 2008 to 2020, and most recently as head of the Supreme National Security Council. In 2021, he was tasked with negotiating a 25-year comprehensive strategic deal with China that was worth billions.

Before the US-Israeli assault began last month, Larijani's portfolio grew.

He was in charge of putting down recent protests that demanded the end of Islamic rule, deploying lethal force to crush the demonstrations. He kept a lid on dissent and was the key liaison with Iran's allies including Russia, as well as regional actors like Qatar and Oman. He also oversaw nuclear negotiations with Washington, and had devised plans for managing Iran during a potential war with the US.

Larijani often acted as the public face of the Iranian govt, sitting for TV interviews with Iranian and foreign media. His social media presence includes selfies with other Iranians, visiting a shrine and waving from the door of an airplane.

Larijani's rise partly sidelined Iran's president, Masoud Pezeshkian, a doctor who was seen as a moderate figure within the Iranian leadership.

Even though Larijani was one of Ayatollah Khamenei's closest advisers, he was not a likely candidate to succeed him because he was not a senior Shia cleric — a fundamental qualification for any successor.

Larijani had a reputation of being able to bridge the country's hard-line military elements and more moderate political factions. His killing could open the way for the military to tighten its grip over the ruling system. Though he was a veteran conservative politician, Larijani had a reputation as a relative pragmatist within a system increasingly dominated by hard-liners. Internally, he had pushed for a moderate new supreme leader to replace Khamenei, NYT reported this week. He lost that argument, however, and the ayatollah's son, Mojtaba Khamenei, was chosen to replace his father.

Larijani had even run in the 2005 presidential elections, losing to populist candidate Mahmoud Ahmadinejad.

Larijani earned a PhD in Western Philosophy from the University of Tehran. He has also written at least six philosophy books, including three exploring the works of German philosopher Immanuel Kant. AGENCIES

Trump: Nato's refusal to help on Iran is a very foolish mistake

Washington: President Trump on Tuesday said the US had been informed by most of its Nato allies that they did not want to get involved with the country's military operation in Iran, a move he described as a "very foolish mistake". Speaking at an Oval Office event, Trump said, "Everyone agrees with us, but they don't want to help. And we, you know, we as the US have to remember that because we think it's pretty shocking," he added.

Trump called on nations to help police the Strait of Hormuz. But several US allies said on Monday they had no plans to send ships to help unblock the strait, effectively rebuffing Trump's plea for military support. Earlier Tuesday, Trump wrote on Truth Social that "Because of the fact that we have had such Military Success, we no longer 'need,' or desire, the NATO Countries' assistance — WE NEVER DID! Likewise, Japan, Australia, or South Korea," Trump said, adding: "WE DO NOT NEED THE HELP OF ANYONE!" REUTERS

Meeting with Xi in five or six weeks, says Trump

Trump on Tuesday also said he and Chinese President Xi Jinping are "resetting" their meeting that was planned for March 31-April 2, and that it will instead take place in around five or six weeks. REUTERS

Taliban: Action will follow, Pak brutality won't go unanswered

Ismat.Ara@timesofindia.com

AFP

Taliban security personnel at the attack site in Kabul on Monday

Vowing retaliation after the strike on Afghanistan's Omid Addiction Treatment Hospital, Taliban chief spokesperson Zabihullah Mujahid told **TOI** from Kabul on Tuesday that the attack "will not go unanswered", asserting that a response will follow. In videos circulating online after the incident, large flames were seen engulfing the hospital, with thick plumes of black smoke rising into the night sky, as parts of the building appear severely damaged. Mujahid put the death toll at "400-plus, with about 250 injured shifted to hospitals across Kabul".

Talking to **TOI** over phone, Mujahid said the Taliban govt was currently focused on rescue operations and identifying victims, but made it clear that action would follow. "Right now, we are busy with rescue, identifying the dead and searching for the injured. It is a matter of deep sorrow for us. But this crime and inhumane brutality will not go unanswered," he said.

The remarks come amid rising tensions following what the Taliban has described as a Pakistani airstrike on a civilian medical facility. Islamabad has denied targeting civilians, saying its strikes were aimed at "terrorist infrastructure".

Dismissing Pakistan's denial, Mujahid accused Islamabad of attempting to shape the narrative. "As a result of Pakistan's aggression, the hospital in Kabul—specifically a rehabilitation centre for people recovering from addiction—was attacked. The entire facility was set on fire. The hospital, and everything inside was consumed by it," he said.

Framing the incident as a deliberate attack on civilians, Mujahid insisted there was no military presence at the site. "This is an inhuman act. We strongly condemn it. There was no military presence at this location—it was a civilian medical facility treating vulnerable people," he said. He said the facility housed adult male patients undergoing long-term rehabilitation. They were innocent civilians "who had been saved from the clutches of death" at the de-addiction centre, he added.

"Pakistan will offer justifications for their crimes and their oppression... They will try their best to deny responsibility and attempt to justify this through propaganda, but such brutality cannot be excused," he said. "This is like Israel in Afghanistan—they attack, commit oppression to ignite regional fires and achieve evil goals through terrorism," the spokesperson charged, vowing to expose Pakistan's "brutality" to global human rights bodies.

"Such actions risk destabilising the region. Pakistan's aim is to ignite conflict and to use terrorism to advance their sinister objectives. We want this incident to be raised globally. International community and human rights organisations must take note of Pakistan's brutality," Mujahid said.

Pak junks Af charge of striking hosp, says 'we hit terror infra'

Islamabad: Pakistan overnight carried out "precision airstrikes" targeting what it described as terrorists and their support infrastructure locations across Afghanistan, but the Afghan govt accused Islamabad of bombing a rehabilitation hospital in Kabul.

Pakistan rejected the claim as false and misleading. "The visible secondary detonations after the strikes clearly indicate the presence of large ammunition depots," Pakistani information minister Attaullah Tarar said on X.

He claimed four Afghan Taliban regime "terrorism sponsoring" military sites were also struck in Nangarhar, destroying associated logistics, ammunition and technical infrastructure.

"False claims made by the propagandists of the Taliban regime cannot fool the Afghans and the world from their heinous actions supporting terrorism," Tarar said.

According to the data shared by Tarar, 684 Afghan Taliban operatives have been killed and another 912 injured so far. He said their 252 posts had been destroyed, while 44 were captured and then destroyed.

Tarar added that 229 tanks, armoured vehicles, and artillery guns of Taliban had been destroyed. He said a drone assembly workshop, "headquarters from where drones were sent," and weapon stocks were also destroyed in Nangarhar and Kabul. PTI

'Basij chief killed in a combat tent alongside other commanders'

▶Continued from P 1

Less is known about Soleimani, who led Iran's paramilitary Basij, an all-volunteer force fiercely loyal to the Islamic Republic. He is not related to Gen Qassem Soleimani, Iran's top general who was killed in a US strike in 2020.

An Israeli military official, speaking on condition of anonymity in line with regulations, said Soleimani was killed in a combat tent alongside other Basij commanders, who were using it as makeshift headquarters as Israel has targeted their bases.

Gen **Gholam Reza Soleimani** was born in the mid-1960s in the western Iranian city of Farsan. He first joined the Basij as a volunteer in 1984 during the Iran-Iraq war. He became the commander of the Basij in 2019. The Basij numbers in thousands, and includes military-style brigades, anti-riot police and a vast network of informers who spy on Iranian society. During protests, plain clothes members can often be seen attacking, beating and hauling away demonstrators.

Have won 'war' with Iran but goals remain unmet: Israel min

Jerusalem: Israeli foreign minister Gideon Saar said Tuesday the country had effectively won its war with Iran, but gave no hint of when the conflict might end, saying only that the campaign would continue until its objectives were achieved.

Speaking at a news conference, Saar said Israel was seeking to remove "existential threats", but did not say how govt would determine when those goals had been met. "One must be patient," he said.

Saar and other Israeli officials have said the aim is to significantly weaken Iran's ability to carry out attacks against Israel over the long term, while creating conditions inside Iran that could ultimately enable Iranians to overthrow their rulers. But Saar also acknowledged that "the regime" in Iran could only be toppled by the Iranian people — an apparent acknowledgement that a rising does not look imminent.

The Israeli military has said it has been carrying out air strikes on Iran's military facilities. "We have already won," Saar said, describing Iran as "dramatically weakened". "This is clear for us and for our neighbours but we will continue until the point that the mission is complete," he said.

Even as Saar claimed victory, Iran fired salvos of missiles at Israel Tuesday, highlighting Tehran's ability to conduct long-range strikes, after more than two weeks of war. REUTERS

Reuters

ANOTHER US WARSHIP ON WAY? A CNN report on Tuesday said that a US navy warship — amphibious assault ship USS Tripoli — believed to be carrying thousands of Marines and sailors to West Asia is nearing the Malacca Strait off Singapore, citing maritime tracking data

Trump was warned of likely Iranian retaliation on regional allies: Report

President Trump was warned that attacking Iran could trigger retaliation against US Gulf allies despite his claims on Monday that Tehran's reaction came as a surprise, said a US official and two sources familiar with US intelligence reports. Pre-war intelligence assessments did not say that Iran's response was "a guarantee, but it certainly was on the list of potential outcomes," said one source, who like the other two requested anonymity to discuss the issue. Trump twice Monday said that Iran's retaliatory strikes against Qatar, Saudi Arabia, the UAE, Bahrain and Kuwait were a surprise, the first time at a Kennedy Center board meeting in the White House. The US official said that Trump was briefed before the war that striking Iran could trigger a broader regional conflict that would include Iranian retaliation against Gulf capitals, especially if Tehran saw those countries actively supporting the US attacks. REUTERS

Kent: Arguments in support of war echo debate over attacking Iraq

▶Continued from P 1

A veteran of the Iraq war, Kent said the arguments in support of attacking Iran, and promises of a swift victory, echoed the debate over going to war against Iraq in 2003. Vice President JD Vance, who has long criticised American interventions, has expressed scepticism about the war, and Trump has said Vance was "less enthusiastic" about the mission than others in the administration.

A former political candidate with connections to right-wing extremists, Kent was confirmed to his post last July. Democrats had strongly opposed his confirmation. Gabbard, CIA director John Ratcliffe, and FBI director Kash Patel are scheduled to testify before lawmakers later this week about threats facing the US.

Kent is not the first official to resign from the administration over the war. A lower-level Trump appointee, Sameerah Munshi, announced last week that she was resigning from the White House Religious Liberty Commission, citing the war as a major factor. AGENCIES

Macron: Won't take part in ops to unblock Hormuz amid hostilities

Paris: President **Emmanuel Macron** said on Tuesday France would never take part in operations to unblock the Strait of Hormuz, pushing back on comments by US President Donald Trump that Paris was willing to help. "We are not party to the conflict and therefore France will never take part in operations to open or liberate the Strait of Hormuz in the current context," Macron said.

France has been pushing on with its own efforts to put together a coalition to secure the Strait of Hormuz once the security situation stabilises and without a US role, French officials have said. "We are convinced that once the situation has calmed down —and I deliberately use this term broadly—once the situation calms down, that is to say, once the main bombing has ceased, we are ready, along with other nations, to assume responsibility for the escort system," he said. REUTERS

Missile debris kills Pak nat'l in UAE as Iran carries out attacks in West Asia

Abu Dhabi: Falling debris from missile interceptions killed one person on Tuesday in the Emirati capital of Abu Dhabi and injured two medical staff in Kuwait, authorities said, as Iran pressed its attacks against Gulf countries.

Debris fell in the Bani Yas area "following the interception of a ballistic missile by air defences", the Abu Dhabi Media Office said on X. Pakistan's embassy there later identified the victim as a Pakistani national, saying it was "saddened by the tragic loss".

On the east coast of the UAE, the oil industrial zone of Fujairah was hit on Tuesday morning, sparking a fire but causing no injuries, local authorities said.

In Kuwait, two medical staff were injured when shrapnel fell on an emergency medical centre where they were working, the health ministry said. Two barrages of missiles were also launched at Qatar on Tuesday, with the Gulf state's defence ministry saying it had intercepted the projectiles in two separate statements. AFP

Trump: Will have the honour of taking Cuba, can do anything with it

The Trump admin is seeking to push Cuban President Miguel Díaz-Canel from power, according to four people familiar with the talks

President Donald Trump on Monday raised the possibility of the US "taking" Cuba, telling reporters at the White House, "I do believe I will be having the honour of taking Cuba." He further said, "Taking Cuba. I mean, whether I free it, take it. I think I can do anything I want with it. They're a very weakened nation right now."

The president's words came on the same day as Cuba experienced a nationwide blackout, amid diminishing fuel supplies. On Monday evening, Cuban officials had planned to announce that the country's communist govt would open itself to foreign investment, including from the US, Cuba's deputy prime minister, Oscar Pérez-Oliva Fraga, told NBC News. "Cuba is open to having a fluid commercial relationship with US companies, also with Cubans residing in the US and their descendants," deputy prime minister said.

US secretary of state Marco Rubio Tuesday said Cuba "needs new people in charge" to repair it. Rubio, who himself is of Cuban heritage, said the island "has an economy that doesn't work in a political and governmental system. They can't fix it." Rubio added, "They have to change dramatically."

The Trump administration is seeking to push Cuban President Miguel Díaz-Canel from power, according to four people familiar with the talks. The move would topple a key figurehead but leave in place the repressive Communist govt that has ruled Cuba for more than 65 years. The Americans have signalled to Cuban negotiators that the president must go, but are leaving the next steps up to the Cubans, the people said.

The US so far is not pushing for any action against Fidel Castro's family members, who remain the country's top power brokers, two of the people said. That is consistent with the general desire of President Trump and his aides to force regime compliance rather than regime change in their foreign policy. In the view of some Trump administration officials, removing Cuba's head of state would allow structural economic changes in the country that Díaz-Canel, whom the officials consider a hard-liner, is unlikely to support, one of the people said.

It is unclear how widely Cuba intends to open its economy. The scheduled announcement, which could not be broadcast, coincided with a severe humanitarian and energy crisis, with some experts saying the island could run out of fuel within weeks because of a de facto blockade by the Trump administration. For the past three months, the US has choked off Cuba's access to foreign oil.

Fraga, who also serves as minister of foreign trade, also said govt would open the economy to investments beyond the private sector. "This goes beyond the commercial realm," he said. "It also applies to investments, not only to small ones, but also to large ones." NYT

WORLD DIGEST

US considers halting HIV aid unless Zambia expands minerals access

The US state department is considering withholding lifesaving assistance to people with HIV in Zambia as a negotiating tactic to force the govt of the southern African country to sign a deal giving the US more access to its critical minerals. "We will only secure our priorities by demonstrating willingness to publicly take support away from Zambia on a massive scale," a draft of a memo prepared for secretary of state **Marco Rubio** by the department's Africa Bureau staff says. A copy of the memo was obtained by NYT. Some 1.3 million people in Zambia rely on daily HIV treatment that is provided through the decades-old US President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief and on tuberculosis and malaria medications that save tens of thousands of Zambian lives each year. The Trump administration is considering whether to "significantly cut assistance" as soon as May, to increase pressure on Zambia, the memo says. The state department declined to comment on the memo.

Bomb attacks kill at least 23 in Nigeria's Maiduguri

At least 23 people were killed and 108 injured on Monday night in suspected multiple suicide bomb attacks in Maiduguri city, the capital of Nigeria's insurgency-hit northeastern state of Borno, police and the military said. The attack in the heart of Maiduguri — the most fortified city in Borno, the seat of the state govt, and the headquarters of Nigeria's military counter-insurgency operations — shows the extent of the threat that Islamist militants continue to pose in the region. The first blast on Monday went off at a post office in the city centre and was immediately followed by another at the popular Monday market nearby, two security sources and three Maiduguri residents told Reuters on Monday. One blast rocked the University of Maiduguri Teaching Hospital and another struck the eastern neighbourhood of Kaleri, also on Monday evening. Security analysts said the attacks had the hallmarks of insurgent group Boko Haram.

Len Deighton, author of bestselling spy thrillers, passes away at 97

London: Len Deighton, a prolific writer whose stylish spy thrillers featured on bestseller lists for years, has died. He was 97. Deighton's literary agent, Tim Bates, said he died Sunday. No cause of death was given.

Deighton's first novel, "The IPCRESS File," helped set the tone of cool and gritty 1960s thrillers and was made into a film starring Michael Caine that helped launch both author and actor to long and stellar careers. "Len was a Titan," Bates said Tuesday. "He was not only one of the greatest spy and thriller writers of the 20th century but also one of our greatest writers in any genre."

Born to a working-class family in a wealthy part of London in 1929 — his father was a chauffeur and his mother a part-time cook — Deighton grew up with a keen eye for the intricacies and absurdities of Britain's class system.

He served in the Royal Air Force as part of Britain's then-mandatory national service, studied art and worked as a waiter, pastry chef and flight attendant before having success as a book and magazine illustrator. His designs included the first UK edition of Jack Kerouac's "On the Road" in 1958.

He wrote "The IPCRESS File" to amuse himself during a vacation. The story of a secret agent confronted with duplicity and bureaucracy from his own side while investigating a Soviet kidnap ring, it was published in 1962 and went on to sell millions of copies. The novel was adapted into a 1965 film, with Caine in a star-making performance as Deighton's protagonist, a sardonic working-class sophisticate with a love of gourmet food. The character is unnamed in the book, though Caine's character was given the name Harry Palmer.

MASTER OF SUSPENSE
Deighton's first novel was 'The IPCRESS File'. Subsequent thrillers included 'Horse Under Water,' 'Funeral in Berlin,' 'Billion-Dollar Brain' & 'An Expensive Place to Die'

Subsequent thrillers "Horse Under Water," "Funeral in Berlin," "Billion-Dollar Brain" and "An Expensive Place to Die" all featured the same hero. "Funeral in Berlin" and "Billion-Dollar Brain" were both also filmed with Caine in the starring role. "Berlin Game," published in 1983, was the first of 10 novels featuring the cynical MI6 officer Bernard Samson. Along with "Mexico Set" and "London Match" it was adapted into the 1988 TV series "Game, Set and Match."

Deighton set several novels around World War II, including "Bomber" (1970), which depicted the conflict in the air war from both British and German viewpoints, and "SS-GB" (1978), an alternative-history novel set in a Nazi-occupied Britain. It was made into a TV series in 2017. Deighton wrote more than two dozen novels in all. The last book in his final trilogy, "Faith," "Hope" and "Charity," was published in 1996.

He also wrote historical non-fiction, including a book about the assassination of President John F Kennedy. Another passion was food. Deighton was food correspondent for The Observer newspaper in the 1960s and wrote several cookbooks aimed at men — a then-novel idea — including "Len Deighton's Action Cook Book" (1965), with recipes illustrated like comic strips. Deighton's first marriage, to Shirley Thompson, ended in divorce. He later married Ysabele de Ranitz. They had two sons. AP

TIMES SPORT

THE TIMES OF INDIA, BENGALURU | WEDNESDAY, MARCH 18, 2026

WORLD NO. 3 FLEETWOOD WILL RETURN TO DEFEND DP WORLD INDIA CHAMPIONSHIP TITLE

RADUCANU TO SKIP MIAMI OPEN AS SHE CONTINUES HER RECOVERY FROM VIRAL ILLNESS

Is BCCI rethinking contracts' valuations?

Board May Look For Ways To Compensate Pacer Bumrah After Grade A+ Was Binned

IANS

Jasprit Bumrah, despite maintaining command over all three formats, has been put in Grade A this year by default

CONTRACT CRITERIA ESTABLISHED IN 2018-19

Grade A+ (must fulfil all three criteria)
- All 3 Formats
- Automatic selection in the team of all formats
- Among top 10 in world rankings in any format

Grade A (must fulfil any two criteria)
- Any 2 Formats
- Automatic selection in the team
- Among top 15 in world rankings
- Automatic selection in Test team with 40+ matches

Grade B (must fulfil any two criteria)
- Any 2 Formats
- Automatic selection in the team for 1 format
- Among top 20 in world rankings Automatic selection in the Test team with 60 or more matches

Grade C (must fulfil any one)
- Any 1 Format
- Automatic selection in the team for 1 format
- On playing 3 Test matches or 8 ODIs in the calendar year.

Arani.Basu@timesofindia.com

New Delhi: The Indian cricket board (BCCI) last month removed the A+ category from its players retainership system, citing there weren't enough candidates to qualify for the gradation. However, TOI understands that the board may be compelled to revisit the valuation structure of the existing gradation of contracts to ensure consistent-performing players don't lose money that they were receiving till last year.

Top of the list is India's premier fast bowler Jasprit Bumrah, who has consistently received the Grade A+ contracts since its inception for the 2018-19 season. It is learnt that the board hasn't officially communicated the value of the contracts this season. As per the previous system, Grade A+ players got Rs 7 cr while Grade A, B and C players received Rs 5 cr, Rs 3 cr and Rs 1 cr, respectively. BCCI, while announcing this year's retainership, didn't mention the amount for each category. It is learnt the players too have not yet been told officially about the worth of their contracts.

Grade A+ was reserved for players who commanded their place in all three formats and a world ranking in the top-10 in any one format. Since Rohit Sharma and Virat Kohli retired from two formats along with Ravindra Jadeja calling it quits from T20Is, the board was left with just Bumrah.

The flash point with the current contract system stems from here because Bumrah, despite maintaining command over all three formats, was put in Grade A this year by default. At present, only Test and ODI captain Shubman Gill, Jasprit Bumrah and Ravindra Jadeja feature in Grade A. "The board is trying to figure out how Bumrah can be compensated. It is understandable that it will be unfair to slash his fees from Rs 7 cr to Rs 5 cr. There are some other players also who seem to have moved down a grade despite being performers. There could be revision in the valuation of the contracts," a BCCI source told **TOI**.

The other name that is debated is India's T20I vice-captain Axar Patel who has been an integral part of the T20I and ODI set-up in the 2024-25 season. Axar has been given a Grade C contract which was valued at Rs 1 cr till last year.

India have tasted one of the most successful years in white-ball cricket in 2024-25 season for which the contracts have been awarded. Test cricket has seen lows at home and in Australia with the high of levelling the five-Test series in England in between.

TOI has accessed the official criteria which were devised when Grade A+ was introduced in 2018-19. As per the document, for a Grade A contract, a player must fulfil any two of the following four criteria: any two formats, automatic selection in the team, among top 15 in world rankings, automatic selection in the Test team with 40 or more matches.

Grade B contract demanded a player to fulfil any two of the following criteria: any two formats, automatic selection in the team, among top 20 in world rankings, automatic selection in the Test team with 60 or more matches.

Interestingly, Axar was world No. 11 allrounder in T20Is in 2025 and had also played a critical role in India's triumph which makes it two out of four for qualifying for Grade A or Grade B contracts. Even if the BCCI altered the criteria in the last three years, a minimum of a Grade B contract seemed viable. It will be interesting to see if the board has revised the criteria for this year as well.

In addition to Bumrah and Axar, there are other players like KL Rahul, Mohammed Siraj, Hardik Pandya and Rishabh Pant who have been pushed to Grade B from Grade A. It must be noted Rahul has been a consistent performer in Tests and ODIs while Siraj and Pant had exceptional Test tour of England. Pandya too has been a core member of India's ODI and T20I sides. BCCI, historically, has considered the injury layoffs of players and has ensured players were not penalised for missing cricket due to injuries.

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Livingstone: No one cares in Eng set-up

Says Shoddy Treatment He Received After Axe Was An 'Eye Opener'

LIVINGSTONE

Liam Livingstone has slammed the England hierarchy following his exile from international cricket, saying "no one cares about you" when you are dropped.

The Lancashire all-rounder has exactly 100 caps for his country across all three formats but has not featured for over a year.

The 32-year-old was highly critical of his treatment by England director of cricket Rob Key. He told ESPN Cricinfo that his time at last year's Champions Trophy as "the worst experience I've had playing cricket" and said he did not miss being involved in the recent T20 World Cup.

Livingstone, reflecting on a lack of communication after his dropping in a brief phone call by England coach Brendon McCullum in May, said: "I don't think it would have reached a minute. I asked why; they said they wanted to try someone else. That was off Baz (McCullum). Brooky (captain Harry Brook) sent me a text. Keysy said nothing, (he) said 'I'll speak to you in the summer'.

"I actually rang him one day, and he said he was busy at a Test camp and then I didn't hear off him until the end of Sept. That probably sums that group up as a collective. That was a bit of an eye-opening experience about the group and the regime: if you're in, you're in, and if you're not in, no one cares about you."

Livingstone, still in demand on the franchise circuit, insisted: "I still believe I'm one of the best players in white-ball cricket in England. Just because I'm not playing for England, because of a couple of people's opinions, it doesn't mean that I'm not good enough to do it." AGENCIES

IPL: SKY's patchy form not a worry for Mahela

Mumbai Indians Coach Admits To Selection Headaches But Says They Are Welcome

Gaurav.Gupta@timesofindia.com

Mumbai: As the Mumbai Indians head coach, Mahela Jayawardene has plenty to be pleased about heading into IPL 2026, which begins on March 28. Four MI players — India's T20 captain Suryakumar Yadav, ace pacer Jasprit Bumrah, captain Hardik Pandya and batter Tilak Varma — played key roles in India's triumph at the 2026 T20 World Cup.

"Our boys are always going to inspire young cricketers. I'm proud to have Rohit, Hardik, Surya, Tilak, and Booms. It's an amazing group, and we're privileged to have them," Mahela said at the closing ceremony of the MI Junior season on Tuesday.

"In a World Cup, everyone has to put their hand up. Different players have to step up at different times. That's why you win a World Cup. Having four MI players in that squad makes us very proud," he added.

MAHELA JAYAWARDENE

'WC winners given extended break'

The MI head coach revealed that the franchise's World Cup winners have been given an "extended break" and will join the camp next week. MI open their IPL 2026 campaign against the Kolkata Knight Riders at the Wankhede Stadium on March 29.

"Every year, we aim to win the trophy, but it's a long season. Preseason will begin as usual. We are working hard and integrating new players. Our World Cup guys have been given an extended break and will join us next weekend. The overseas players also went home and will return soon. They'll have about a week of training before the first game," Mahela said.

'Surya would want to improve his consistency'

Critics may point to Suryakumar Yadav's modest returns in the World Cup — 242 runs in nine matches at 30.25, with a strike rate of 136.72. However, Mahela was unperturbed, calling him a "class operator."

"I don't think SKY is too worried about it. He's a class operator and will come good. He contributed when it mattered. Consistency is something he would want to improve," Jayawardene said.

Praising Suryakumar's leadership, Mahela highlighted his composure and decision-making. "The way he led the team and held everything together was impressive. I'm sure he'll come back refreshed and join the camp with a smile," he added.

SURYAKUMAR YADAV

'Bumrah is a special player'

Jayawardene believes Bumrah continues to set new benchmarks. "Jassi is always a special, special player. The way he executed his skills in crucial moments in the World Cup was outstanding. Having worked closely with him, I know the planning that goes into those performances. I'm very happy for him," Mahela said. "I'm looking forward to getting everyone together and preparing for the season," he added.

Rohit not to be used as Impact Player?

With former captain Rohit Sharma significantly improving his fitness over the past year, MI are unlikely to use the 38-year-old purely as an Impact Player. Asked about Rohit's role, Mahela said, "He hasn't played a lot of cricket recently, but he has done a lot of work behind the scenes."

GAVASKAR SLAMS SUNRISERS LEEDS FOR SIGNING PAK SPINNER ABRAR

Cricket legend Sunil Gavaskar has alleged that the signing of Pakistan spinner Abrar Ahmed by an Indian-owned Hundred franchise in England "indirectly contributes to the deaths of Indian soldiers and civilians".

Sunrisers Leeds — from the same group that controls IPL team Sunrisers Hyderabad — faced a social media backlash after last week clinching a deal for Abrar, paying £190,000.

Former India captain Gavaskar, 76, launched a blistering attack in a newspaper column. "The fees that they pay to a Pakistani player, who then pays income tax to his government, which buys arms and weapons, indirectly contributes to the deaths of Indian soldiers and civilians," he wrote. "Whether it is an Indian entity or an overseas subsidiary of the entity that is making the payment, if the owner is Indian then he or she is contributing to the Indian casualties."

"There's still time to undo the wrong and hopefully wiser counsels will prevail," added Gavaskar. AGENCIES

Injuries and sleepless nights

Dwaipayan.Datta
@timesofindia.com

Injuries, or non-availability, to top pacers close to the start of the IPL can give sleepless nights to franchise coaches and the support staff. While Lucknow Super Giants, for a few years now, have been one of the worst-affected teams, this time around three teams are sweating over their pace resources — Kolkata Knight Riders, Sunrisers Hyderabad and Royal Challengers Bengaluru. For KKR, their top two pacers — Harshit Rana and Matheesha Pathirana — are dealing with injuries. They lost Mustafizur Rahman too due to reasons beyond cricket, but have drafted in Zimbabwean Blessing Muzarabani in his place.

SRH, too, are in tricky territory over the fitness of their skipper Pat Cummins while it's not sure whether RCB will get their spearhead Josh Hazlewood from the beginning of the tournament.

TOI takes a look at how the situation might pan out for these teams.

Double jeopardy for KKR

Harshit Rana, KKR's star Indian pacer, is set to miss most of the IPL due to a knee surgery. While under threat to even miss the entire IPL season, the management is not naming a replacement right away hoping that the 24-year-old will be fit towards the business end. KKR have a few Indian pacers in Vaibhav Arora and Akash Deep, and they will have to step up along with Muzarabani and Cameron Green. That brings us to their second injury worry, Matheesha Pathirana. The three-time champions paid Rs 18 crore for the former CSK slinger, who is known to be injury-prone. He missed most of the T20 World Cup with a calf injury but reports suggest that he will be fit in time for the IPL. But given his erratic fitness situation, it will be a miracle if Pathirana is fit for most part. That his remodelled action following his injuries has made him less effective as a bowler will also worry the 2024 champions.

Captaincy change for SRH?

The SRH pace attack revolves around Pat Cummins, in addition to the fact that he is the captain of the team. But the Aussie Test skipper is still recovering from a back injury that was aggravated when he played an Ashes Test despite not being fully fit. There is no clarity when he will be fit and available, and the buzz is that SRH may hand the captaincy to Ishan Kishan, who had quite a superb T20 World Cup with the bat. There's absolutely no one in the SRH attack who is close to the quality of Cummins in T20s. The likes of Shivam Mavi, Jaydev Unadkat and Ehsan Malinga can be just about serviceable, but it may be a massive challenge for SRH, despite their superb batting line-up should Cummins remain unavailable for long.

Not enough Josh for RCB

Josh Hazlewood is still recuperating from his hamstring and Achilles heel injuries and hasn't played cricket for quite some time. In RCB's first title triumph last year, the Australian had taken 22 wickets at an average of 17.54 and it's his ability to strike the crucial blows that made a serious difference. The paceman is running against time to be fit and Kiwi pacer Jacob Duffy is likely to play in his absence. Duffy, though a capable bowler, isn't exactly a threat on Indian pitches and the RCB management will hoping to have Hazlewood back in time to lead the attack with Bhuvneshwar Kumar and Yash Dayal as quality support.

RANA'S BOWLING RECORD IN IPL

	M	Wkts	Ave	Best	4WI	SR	ER
Overall (2022-25)	34	40	25.72	3/24	2	16.2	9.51
In wins	18	27	19.00	3/24	0	13.8	8.25

19 Captured 19 wickets at 20.15 runs apiece in 13 matches in 2024 — his best year in the IPL. He was the second highest wicket-taker for KKR in 2024 behind CV Varun's tally of 21 at 19.14 runs apiece in 15 matches.

— **Stats:** Rajesh Kumar

CUMMINS' BOWLING RECORD IN IPL

	M	Wkts	Ave	Best	4WI	SR	ER
Overall	72	79	30.03	4/34	1	20.4	8.80
For DD 2017	12	15	24.86	2/20	0	18.4	8.07
For KKR 2014-22	30	30	32.80	4/34	1	22.5	8.73
For SRH (all games as captain)	30	34	29.88	3/19	0	19.5	9.18
In wins	32	44	23.11	4/34	1	16.7	8.25

4/34 Produced his only four-wicket haul for Kolkata Knight Riders vs Rajasthan Royals in Dubai on Nov 1, 2020, ensuring a 60-run win for his team.

HAZLEWOOD'S BOWLING RECORD IN IPL

	M	Wkts	Ave	Best	4WI	SR	ER
Overall	39	57	20.98	4/25	2	15.2	8.27
For CSK 2020-21	12	12	29.75	3/24	0	22.5	7.93
For RCB 2022-25	27	45	18.64	4/25	2	13.2	8.43
In wins	22	45	14.77	4/25	2	11.3	7.80

2 Registered two four-wicket hauls in wins — both for RCB — 4/25 vs LSG at DY Patil on April 19, 2022 and 4/33 vs RR in Bengaluru on April 24, 2025.

'AHMED NOT CONCERNED BY BACKLASH'

Mumbai: Mystery spinner Abrar Ahmed is not losing sleep over the possible backlash, a news report said on Tuesday.

While the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) and Abrar are tight-lipped on the backlash, sources said there are no concerns as the matter is between England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB) and the franchise. "The noise on Abrar's signing is not unexpected, but he is not losing sleep over the uproar," PCB sources told www.telecomasia.net. "The coach of Sunrisers Leeds, Daniel Vettori, conveyed the signing to Abrar and advised him to be in touch and prepared to give his best," they said. IANS

CURRENT INDIAN SIDE STRONGEST T20I TEAM EVER, SAYS PONTING

Dubai: Former Australia captain Ricky Ponting hailed India as the strongest T20I side ever assembled after their latest T20 World Cup triumph.

"It's really hard to argue a point against that. If you look at this, not just the T20I team but their white-ball record in ICC events over the last five or six years, it's quite remarkable," Ponting said on The ICC Review when asked if the current Indian group is the strongest ever in T20I cricket.

"A lot of people probably identified before this tournament started the depth and the strength that this current Indian team had, and also the experience that they have. This is a very, very strong Indian white-ball team, not just a T20 team. Back-to-back World Cups, hats off to them."

Ponting said the experience of playing high-pressure cricket, both internationally and in the IPL, has played a major role in shaping the team. "The one thing that's probably overlooked with this current team is the amount of experience and the amount of cricket a lot of these guys have played, whether it's international cricket or even just the IPL," said the Punjab Kings head coach." PTI

GALLERY

Conway shines

Devon Conway blasted a half-century before New Zealand skittled South Africa cheaply to win the second T20I by 68 runs on Tuesday and level the five-match series 1-1. Conway's 60 off 49 balls set the home side up for a competitive 175/6 after being sent in to bat at Hamilton's Seddon Park.

Brief scores: New Zealand: 175/6 in 20 overs (Devon Conway 60, Josh Clarkson 26n.o; Wiaan Mulder 2-14) bt **South Africa: 107 all out in 15.3 overs** (George Linde 33; Lockie Ferguson 3-16, Ben Sears 3-14, Mitchell Santner 2-19).

Mandhana retains top spot: Harmanpreet Kaur moved up to seventh even as her deputy Smriti Mandhana continued to hold on to the top spot in the latest women's ODI rankings released on Tuesday. Kaur moved up a spot to seventh after New Zealand legend Sophie Devine dropped two rungs to climb down to ninth. Jemimah Rodrigues remained static on 12th.

Aakarshi enters main draw: Aakarshi Kashyap advanced to the women's singles main draw at the Orleans Masters Super 300 badmintonin Orleans on Tuesday. Aakarshi defeated compatriot Shriyanshi Valishetty 21-19, 17-21, 21-13 before overcoming Lee Y H of Chinese Taipei 21-17, 21-19.

Aussie Matosevic banned: Australian tennis player-turned-coach Marinko Matosevic was slapped with a four-year ban on Tuesday for breaching anti-doping rules between 2018 and 2020. The former world number 39, who most recently helped coach current Australian players Chris O'Connell and Jordan Thompson admitted to blood doping in comments shortly before the hearing.

'Being in top-20 gives a sense of belonging'

Hindol Basu & Sabi Hussain | TNN

TOI

RISING STAR: Anahat Singh

TOI SPECIAL

At just 18, Anahat Singh is no longer India's brightest squash prospect — she is already its present. A breakthrough 2025, followed by a string of statement wins in 2026, has propelled her into the world's top 20 and firmly into the conversation as a potential Olympic medal contender. In this exclusive interview to TOI, the Delhi girl speaks about the road to Los Angeles 2028.

How do you assess your season so far? I've had big wins in major tournaments and I'm happy with my progress. The focus is to go deeper in big events, and maintain this level consistently.

From junior success to becoming India No. 1, what has clicked for you?
The biggest shift was adapting to the senior level. Early on, I could compete in one match but struggled to sustain that level through a tournament. Now, I'm better at handling consecutive tough matches. Training intensity, understanding the pace and building consistency have made the difference.

You are now working with former world No. 1 Gregory Gaultier? It's been amazing. He's been world No. 1 and understands every aspect of the journey. He knows what it takes to climb the rankings and handles both technical and mental aspects. We've been working together for long now, spending more time in Prague (where Gregory is based) and at tournaments, and that understanding is really helping my game.

Has there been a turning point in your career where you felt ready for big wins?
The Canadian Open last year. I beat a top-20 player and then a top-10 player in the same tournament. That gave me belief that I could not just compete but win against top players in big tournaments.

How do you handle pressure? I actually feel less pressure against top players. There's no expectation to win, so I play freely. That helps me perform better compared to matches where I'm expected to win.

You've broken into the top 20. How are you dealing with the spotlight?
It gives me a sense of belonging. I now feel comfortable training with top players and competing with them. It also guarantees entry into major tournaments, which is very important for progress.

How are you approaching the LA journey?
The Olympics is the big goal, but there are many steps before that. I'm taking it one tournament at a time. Qualification is tough with only 16 spots, so my priority is to improve my ranking to secure a place. Once that's done, I can focus fully on preparing for a medal.

WC: Indian men drawn with Pakistan

Arnab.Seal@timesofindia.com

India and Pakistan have been clubbed in the same group for the FIH men's hockey World Cup in the Netherlands and Belgium this August. Both teams were drawn in Group D at the draw ceremony in Amsterdam on Tuesday. Both teams are already scheduled to face each other twice earlier in the year when they play a double header in the Pro League in England in June. The last time India played Pakistan was at the 2024 Asian Champions Trophy in Moqi, China, where India had grabbed a 2-1 win.

HOCKEY

Besides the two, the group also consists of England and Wales and they will play all their group matches in Amstelveen, the Netherlands. India were clubbed with England in the 2023 World Cup and played out a goalless draw in Rourkela. The Indian women's team, meanwhile, has been clubbed with England, China and South Africa in Group D and they, too, will play all their group matches in the Netherlands. **Men: Pool A:** Netherlands, Argentina, New Zealand, Japan (playing in the Netherlands); **Pool B:** Belgium, Germany, France, Malaysia (playing in Belgium); **Pool C:** Australia, Spain, Ireland, South Africa (playing in Belgium); **Pool D:** England, India, Pakistan, Wales (playing in the Netherlands). **Women: Pool A:** Netherlands, Australia, Chile, Japan (playing in the Netherlands); **Pool B:** Argentina, Germany, USA, Scotland (playing in Belgium); **Pool C:** Belgium, Spain, New Zealand, Ireland (playing in Belgium); **Pool D:** China, England, India, South Africa (playing in the Netherlands)

SNAP SHOTS

Meenakshi shocks Antim

Meenakshi Goyat shocked Antim Panghal to book her place in the Indian women's team for the next month's Asian Championships, handing the two-time World Championship medallist a rare defeat at home. Having lost to Antim thrice in the earlier trials, Meenakshi put up a display of solid defence, eking out an impressive 'win by fall' after leading 6-2 against the Asian Games bronze medal winner.

Malaysia out of Asian Cup race: Malaysia have been knocked out of contention for the 2027 Asian Cup after the Asian Football Confederation on Tuesday overturned their qualifying wins over Nepal and Vietnam, saying the national team fielded players who were not eligible to represent the country. The AFC's disciplinary ruling converted both matches into 3-0 forfeits, putting Malaysia six points behind Vietnam at the top of Group F and removing any mathematical possibility of advancing, with one game left. The Football Association of Malaysia (FAM) was also fined $50,000.

Ramsey out of WC play-off squad: Wales captain Aaron Ramsey has been left out of the squad for this month's World Cup play-offs, casting fresh doubts over his future in international football. Ramsey has been without a club since leaving Pumas in Dec, having not played for the Mexican side since Sept.

I-League 2 from March 27: The I-League 2 season, the third tier of Indian men's football featuring nine clubs, will begin on March 27 and will be played in a single round-robin, home-and-away format, with each team playing eight matches -- four at home and four away. Karbi Anglong Morning Star FC will take on Sudeva Delhi FC at the KASA Stadium in Diphu, while GMSC will face Sporting Club Bengaluru at the Cooperage Stadium in Mumbai on the opening day. The season will conclude on May 15.

Karnataka women settle for bronze: Karnataka women's team settled for the bronze medal in the Senior National Table Tennis Championships in Indore. In the semifinals, Karnataka lost 1-3 against Reserve Bank of India (RBI). Earlier, in the quarterfinal, Karnataka handed Tamil Nadu a 3-1 defeat, the Karnataka Table Tennis Association said in a release. **Results: Women: Semifinal:** RBI bt Karnataka 3-1 (Diya Chitale bt Kushi Viswanath 11-6, 11-5, 11-8; Ayhika Mukherjee bt Tanishka Kalbhairav 11-5, 11-4, 11-7; Nikhat Banu lost to Trupti Purohit 16-18, 16-14, 11-8, 8-11, 7-11; Diya bt Tanishka 11-5, 10-12, 11-8, 11-6). **Quarters:** Karnataka bt Tamil Nadu 3-1 (Tanishka bt Nithyashree Mani 10-12, 11-8, 11-5, 11-9; Kushi lost to Selena Deepthi 11-6, 11-7, 6-11, 7-11, 13-15; Trupti bt Yashini Sivasankar 11-8, 11-5, 11-8; Tanishka bt Seelena Deepthi 11-9, 11-6, 6-11, 11-7).

Vyasa clinches feature: Favourite Vyasa, from the stables of Sandeep, ridden by Ashhad Asbar, won the upper division of the Onnu Onnu Onnu Plate, the feature event of the races in Hyderabad on Tuesday.

This newspaper is published by Manjeet Singh Dhami from Bennett Coleman & Co Ltd., Elixir Chancery Building, 1st, 2nd and 4th Floor, 135, Residency Road, Shanthala Nagar, Bengaluru – 560025 | Phones: Office: EPABX -080-42200000, Editorial: 080-46787878 | on behalf of Bennett Coleman & Co Ltd., edited by Neelam Raaj and printed by Sekar Sai Bennett Coleman & Co Ltd., The Times of India Press, No. 9/10/11-A, 4th Main, KIADB Bommasandra Industrial Area, Anekal Taluk, Bangalore – 560 099 (Ph: - 080-22899999). Regd office: Dr. D.N. Road, Mumbai - 400 001.
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Are Neymar's WC hopes fading?

Brazil In Danger Of Missing An Iconic No. 10 As Star Left Out Of Warm-Ups

Getty Images

THE LAST WALTZ? Neymar (left) duels with Croatia's Luka Modric during the 2022 World Cup quarters in Qatar

"Neymar is not at 100% of his capability. If he can be at 100% physically, he can be there at the World Cup. Neymar has to keep working and playing." —Carlo Ancelotti, BRAZIL COACH

"I REMAIN FOCUSED. WE WILL ACHIEVE OUR GOAL. THE DREAM CONTINUES." —Neymar

Rio de Janeiro: Neymar's World Cup prospects dwindled Monday when Brazil coach Carlo Ancelotti excluded him from the squad for a pair of friendlies in the United States.

Brazil face France in Boston on March 26 and Croatia in Orlando on March 31 in the team's final matches before World Cup rosters are announced. "Neymar is not at 100% and therefore he is not on the list," Ancelotti said.

Neymar, 34, is Brazil's all-time leader with 79 goals, but the aging marksman has not played internationally since he sustained a major knee injury in October 2023 during a World Cup qualifying loss to Uruguay.

He is playing for Santos, his boyhood club in Brazil's top division, following decorated spells at Barcelona and PSG and a short stop at Al Hilal in Saudi Arabia.

Ranked No. 5, Brazil ultimately qualified comfortably and was placed in Group C of the World Cup with Haiti, Morocco and Scotland. The Selecao open the tournament June 13 against Morocco in East Rutherford, NJ, the site of the July 19 final. After the roster submission deadline, Brazil are scheduled to play tuneup matches against Panama on May 31 and Egypt on June 6.

Brazil have exited in the quarterfinals at four of the past five editions. Neymar, a three-time World Cup participant, was injured and missed the catastrophic 7-1 home loss to Germany in the 2014 semifinals.

The 26-man squad for the US friendlies includes Lyon forward Endrick and Brentford forward Igor Thiago, who are receiving their first call-ups since Ancelotti's hiring last year.

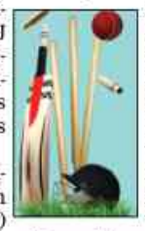
"We are preparing well for this World Cup. We want to arrive in the best possible condition technically, physically and mentally," Ancelotti said. "There are players who deserve to be here because they are doing well in their respective leagues." Endrick, 19, made the last of his 14 international appearances a year ago. REUTERS

Brazil will extend Ancelotti's contract to 2030 WC

Ancelotti says the Brazilian Football Confederation is set to extend his contract to the 2030 World Cup. The 66-year-old Italian took over Brazil last May. Ancelotti said on Monday neither he nor the CBF "have any issues to extend the deal." AP

Bhagirathi lift title

Bengaluru: Bhagirathi Group clinched the KSCA Group II (Division II) league-cum-knockout cricket tournament title here recently. Aadharsh SJ (63) and Aaron K Joseph (3/22) helped Bhagirathi beat Infosys Cricket Club by 36 runs in the final.



Opting to bat, Bhagirathi openers Aadharsh and Aaron Joseph (40) laid the foundation with a 97-run stand. Dheeraj Urs then sent back Aadharsh, who hit six fours and four sixes in his 36-ball knock. Aarav Mahesh (28) also chipped in to power the team to 188/7 in 20 overs. Varun Kumar was the pick of the bowlers with three scalps.

Infosys needed a strong start, but they lost opener Arjun Potti and Swaroop SH (25) in the powerplay. With Aaron (3/22) taking key wickets in the middle overs, Infosys were tottering at 67/5 in 9.1 overs. Pradyumna Srivatsa (58) and Vineeth B stitched a 33-ball 51-run stand for the sixth wicket, but they were still restricted to 152/9.

Brief scores (final): Bhagirathi: 188/7 in 20 overs (Aadharsh SJ 63, Aaron Joseph 40, Aarav Mahesh 28; Vineeth B 2-31, Varun Kumar HC 3-28) bt **Infosys: 152/9 in 20 overs** (Sachin Rajput 25, Swaroop SH 25, Pradyumna Srivatsa 58; Melu Kumar 2-27, Aaron Joseph 3-22). TNN

Reds hope to trigger Anfield magic

Liverpool will hope the aura of their Anfield home can help overcome a 1-0 loss in the first leg at Galatasaray. The mood seems positive ahead of the second leg – Arne Slot, Dominik Szoboszlai and Mohamed Salah sported big smiles during the training session on Tuesday.

During the press conference, coach Arne Slot said, "We have played them twice and lost twice. The good thing is that it's the first time we're playing at home (against them) and we have the support of our fans. Historically and this season, we have shown we are stronger at home than away. We beat Real Madrid and Atleti here (in the league phase). We are working extremely hard to ensure the details are in our favour and not Galatasaray's like last time."

Lamenting the lack of conviction at the goalmouth in the first leg, Slot said, "We had our chances and we didn't take them. That is also down to Galatasaray. They have a great energy in their team and they throw everything in front of the ball."

Reds defender Andy Robertson said, "We believe this squad is good enough to be in the last eight of Champions League but we have to show it."

Ahead of their home clash against Newcastle, Barca coach Hansi Flick said, "It will be a tough game tomorrow. They're a physical team, aggressive man-to-man, in transition they are fast players. "We have to play our perfect game tomorrow and this is important — we'll try to do this."

Barcelona defender Pau Cubarsi said that he believed his team can put on a much improved showing at home. "The intensity they had at their stadium was spectacular," said the 19-year-old centre-back. "It will be different. We're at home with the fans supporting us." AGENCIES

AFP

SHOULDER, SOLDIER: Raphinha (left) and Yamal during training in Barcelona

5 Barca have won their last five CL round of 16 ties against English teams, and 15 of their last 16 ties at this stage of the competition overall. Newcastle have won 1 and lost 2 of their 3 previous UEFA two-legged ties against Spanish opposition.

1 Yamal is one goal away from equalling the record for the most Champions League goals scored before turning 19. The current benchmark is held by Kylian Mbappe, who struck ten times in the competition prior to his 19th birthday.

8 Liverpool have reached the CL round of 16 in eight of the last nine seasons, but they have lost their last two ties at this stage. Galatasaray are targeting a first quarterfinal appearance since 2012/13.

Tonight's matches

Barcelona (1) vs Newcastle (1); Tottenham (2) vs Atletico (5); Bayern Munich (6) vs Atalanta (1); Liverpool (0) vs Galatasaray (1)

*** First-leg scores in brackets**

MEXICO OPEN TO HOSTING IRAN AS NEGOTIATIONS ON WITH FIFA TO MOVE MATCHES

Mexican president Claudia Sheinbaum said on Tuesday that her country would have no problem hosting Iran's matches in the 2026 World Cup, if FIFA agrees. Iran's football federation is in discussions with FIFA about moving their World Cup matches to Mexico from the United States due to concerns about the safety of their players, Iranian football president Mehdi Taj said.

US president Donald Trump said last week it might not be appropriate for them to play in the US 'for their own life and safety.' "When Trump has explicitly stated that he cannot ensure the security of the Iranian national team, we will certainly not travel to America," said Taj in a post.

Iran duo practises with Brisbane Roar: Iran women's football team's Fatemeh Pasandideh and Atefeh Ramezanisadeh, who were granted asylum in Aus, were seen in a practice session with Brisbane Roar.

WHY IS WADA DEBATING A RULE TO BAN TRUMP FROM LA?

WADA's authority stems from its role in writing and executing anti-doping rules.

- Its funding and governance are split between the IOC and participating govts. Govts are tied to WADA through an agreement with UNESCO, which mandates paying dues, adhering to rules.
- The push for this rule is **a direct response to the US govt withholding $7.3 million in dues for 2024 and 2025.** This protest is over WADA's handling of transparency issues, specifically a case involving Chinese swimmers who tested positive for banned substances but were allowed to compete.

CUSTOMS DOWN DELL

Bengaluru: Central Excise & Customs registered a four-wicket win over Dell Cricket Club in the KSCA Group II (Div I) league-cum-knockout tournament here recently. Opting to bat, Dell posted 171/6 in 20 overs. In reply, Central Excise & Customs rode on Rohan RR's half-century to chase down the target in 19.3 overs.

Brief scores: Dell: 171/6 in 20 overs (Vinay Radha 32, Sachin Gankal 30, Dhanu 32 n.o.; Suresh Karani 2-31) lost to **Central Excise & Customs: 172/6 in 19.3 overs** (Rohan RR 54, Samarth R 43, Thippa Reddy 35 n.o.; Rajesh Ayyakkannu 2-27, Aevant Khothari 2-29).

HAL SC: 151 in 18.4 overs (Sumukha Prasad 30, Gagandeep K 26, Monish Reddy 34; Arjun Gowda 3-31, MS Bhandage 4-23) bt **AGORC:** 148/8 in 20 overs (Arjun Hoysala 51, Manoj Bhandage 29, Monish Reddy 2-27; Rahul Prasanna 2-33, Nathan D'Mello 2-25). TNN

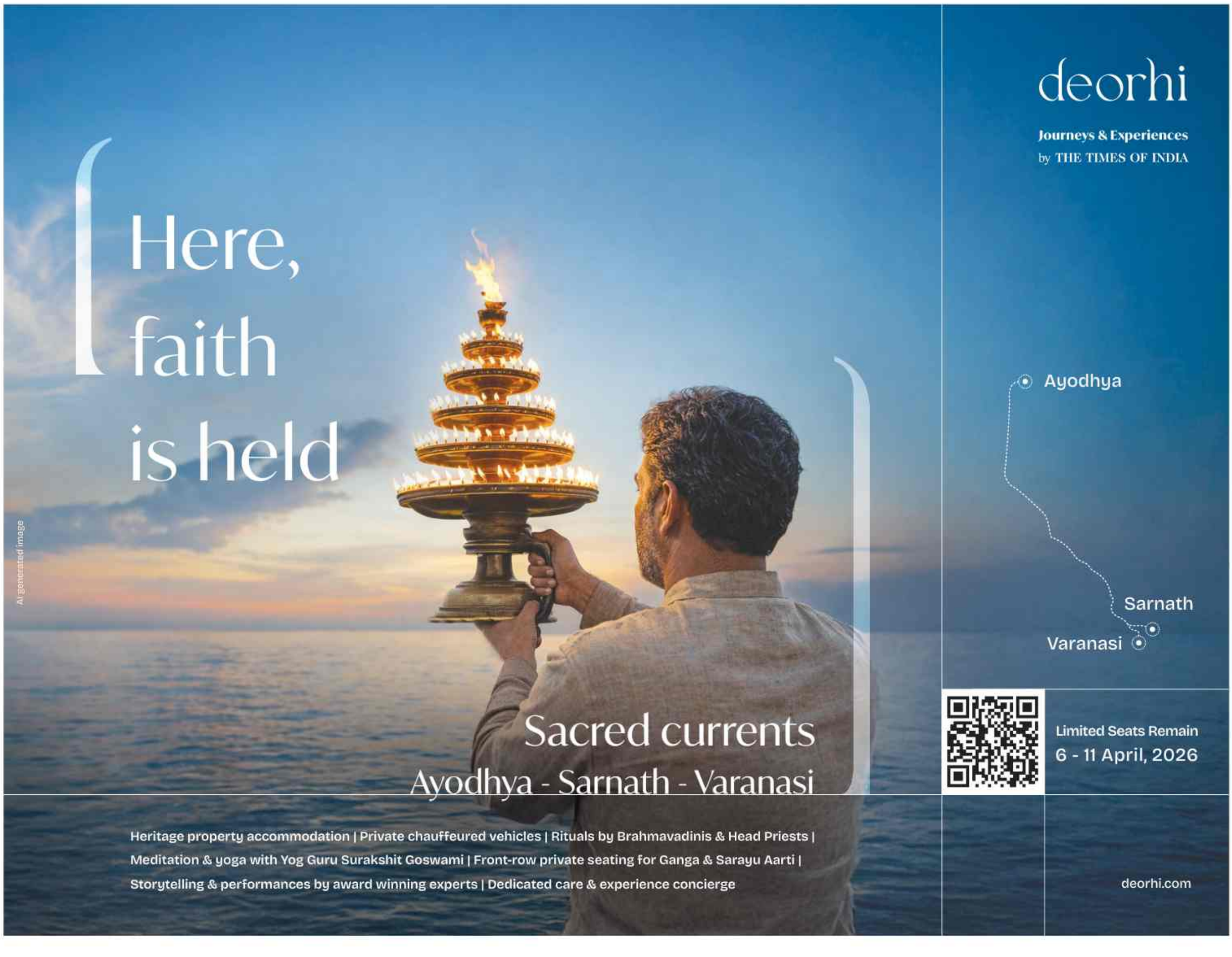
CRICKET

RBI claim big win

HOCKEY Madan TB and Thanu Nanjappa struck hat-tricks to power Reserve Bank of India (RBI) to a 9-0 win over Dhyanchand Hockey Club, Tumkur, in the KSHA 'B' Division Hockey League Championship in Bengaluru on Tuesday.

Results: RBI 9 (Madan TD 3, 48, 50; Thanu Nanjappa 4, 16, 22; Varun Ganapathi 40, 46; Sidanth Uthappa 43) bt Dhyanchand HC, Tumkur 0.

Today's matches: Ashco HC vs Dhyanchand HC, Tumkur (3 pm). TNN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British writer Len Deighton, who created the thick-bespectacled, working-class spy, who was an antidote to the debonair James Bond, passes away ay 97

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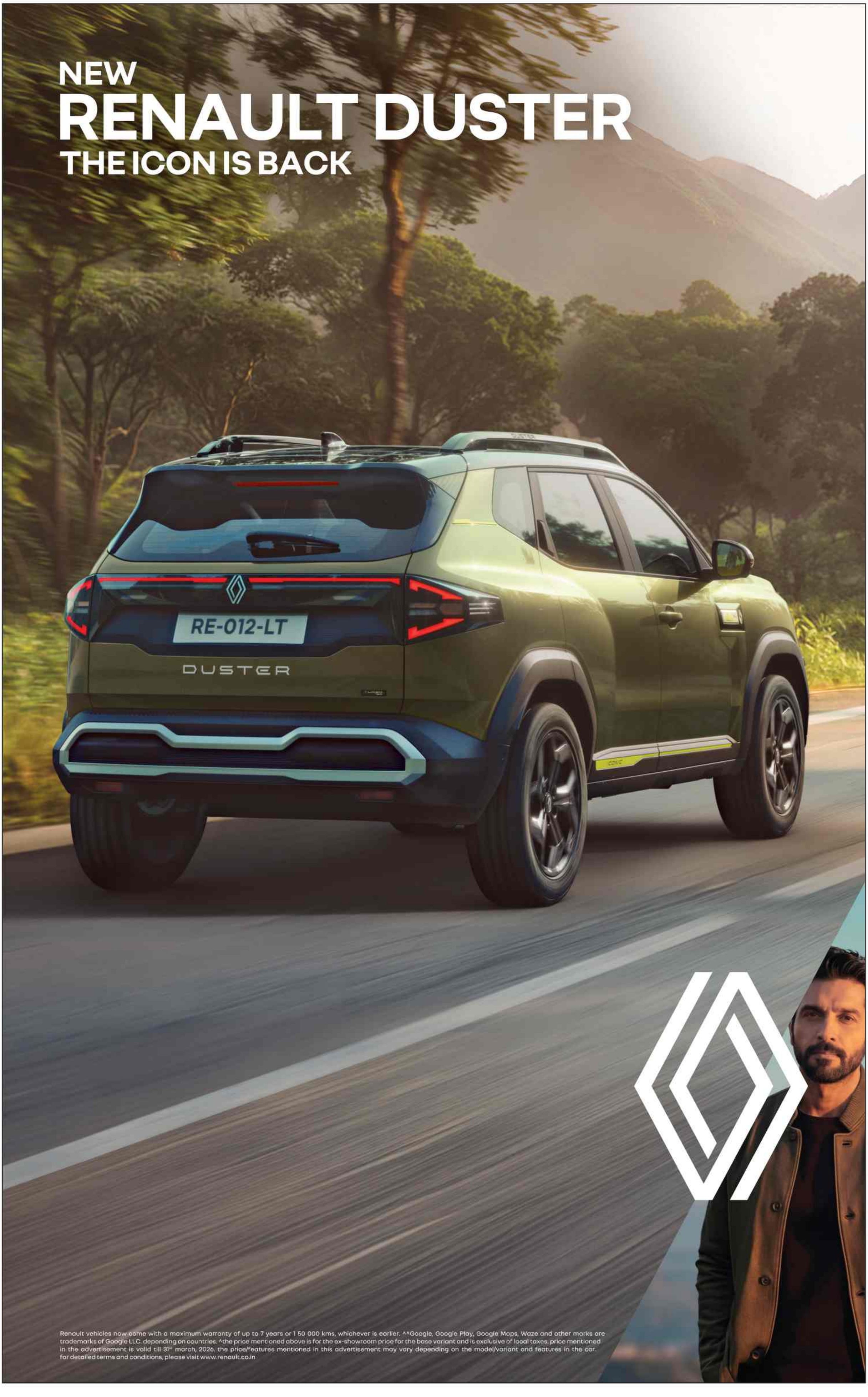
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